

A Note on Transcribing 4'33"

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Abstract

There are conceptual difficulties in accepting 4'33" as music because it is supposed to be music where no music is performed, where the performer is to perform the act of not performing. 4'33" is an invitation to accept the paradox inherent in it. It is still contentious whether 4'33" is music but it cannot be denied that it has changed how we approach music. Though 4'33" has changed our thinking about music, it fails in achieving Cage's intention of replacing hierarchy with anarchy in music. The paper argues that instead of establishing anarchy in music, Cage deepens existing hierarchies in music-making. The argument proceeds through the observation that 4'33" does not admit of significant transcriptions, which is an important musical activity in the Western music idiom, because Cage, in writing 4'33," have also exhausted all possible transcriptions of it.

Key Words: john cage, 4'33", paradox, zen, transcription, silence.

I

Amongst his works, John Cage had a favourite.¹ It was 4'33", which he referred fondly as his "silent piece"². This work, premiered by the virtuoso pianist David Tudor in 1952 near Woodstock, outside of New York, generated an extensive discussion.³ The title of the piece takes from the intended length of the piece i.e., four minutes and thirty three seconds. It essentially is a piece of music wherein the performer comes on stage and keeps quiet on the instrument for that duration of time. This duration is marked by gestures of keeping silence. On the piano, the gesture is to close the keyboard lid in the beginning and to open it at the end marking the temporal boundary of the piece. Such gestures within the piece are also made to mark the internal boundaries of its three movements.⁴

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There are at least three versions of the piece.⁵ The first is David Tudor's reconstruction of the score that he used in the premiere. It is essentially a blank piano score with three vertical lines demarcating the three movements within the piece, and the distance between these lines graphically representing the length of the movements.⁶ The second, "Kremen" score, does away with the staves of Tudor's reconstruction. It consists of three folded, almost blank, pages.⁷ The third called "TACET", i.e., instruction not to play but remain silent, consists of a single page with the three movements all marked "Tacet". This third version has an instruction at the bottom.

The title of this work is the total length in minutes and seconds of its performance... However, the work may be performed by any instrumentalist or combination of instrumentalists and last any length of time.⁸

This direction is one of the many puzzles of the piece. In a broad usage of the term, it presents paradoxes at different levels. It is a silent piece which is not silent. It is a musical piece in which no "music" is played. It is music that does not have a specified instrumentation and without any possibility of significant transcription - for the distinction between the original and the transcribed are erased. On another level it is an ironical situation for Cage to privilege 4'33", for he questioned privileges - in music, creativity and society at large.⁹

II

It is puzzling to call a musical piece silent. This puzzle would vanish if it turns out that 4'33" is not music. Alternatively, the puzzle could be dissolved if it is not silent though it has been called silent. The puzzle could be unraveled if it is shown that it presents to us as a puzzle only because of the peculiarity, and particularity of the use of "silent". The puzzle might not be there if the supposition¹⁰ of the word "silent" is not silence.

Stephen Davies in his assessment of 4'33" asserts that it is a work of art, theatre, a "happening", a comment on the nature of music.¹¹ But he also says that it is not music - broadly accepted as organized, structured sound. Davies uses this broad definition of music, which Cage had adopted, to launch his argument.¹² That 4'33" is structured sound finds support in the

idea that the silence of the performer gives structure to the ambient noise which could be appropriated as the content of 4'33". To this, Davies says that the relation of the performer to such content is not the same as that of a performer intentionally structuring the sound. The ambient sounds, which are to be the content of 4'33", do not stand in an adequate relation to the performer – a relation which Davies thinks should be grounded in his contract with the composer.¹³ The performer's silence cannot articulate the content which is to be the content of the piece. He observes that "it does not follow from the fact that silence serves as a structuring function in all sounded music that a piece in which no sounds are made by the performer thereby achieves an organized structure."¹⁴ Davies then brings in suggestions by Levinson¹⁵ that the performer could have a minimal, implicit relation to the ambient sound. A minimal relation could be there in the sense of the performer choosing the time and place of performance and hence somehow have "control" over the content of the performance.¹⁶ The other way in which the performer/ composer could have a relation with the sound of 4'33" is through the act of framing 4'33", through the requisite gestures of marking the boundaries of the piece.¹⁷ These possible reasons, according to Davies are trumped by a positive argument against 4'33" being music. A part of his argument that the work in question is not music is that it does not differentiate what is to count as its content and what is "ambient" because Cage intends all sounds in the performance environment to be content of 4'33". This in turn shows, since structure needs distinction between its content and that which does not belong to it, that it cannot have a structure and an organization of sound which Cage himself takes to be a necessary condition of music.

There is at least one argument¹⁸ against the assumption of Davies that Cage intends any and all sounds as content of 4'33". But without going into it, I would like to suggest that the dichotomy of ambient noise and content within the performance of 4'33" could depend on the audience's appropriation. Davies in a way argues for this idea that perception is structure imputing.¹⁹ That some sounds would be ignored though present, that some sound would demand more attention than some others are plausible. If that is so then the very act of appropriation comes with organizing what is being appropriated. This in turn suggests that ambient noise within the content, the frame of 4'33" is still possible. Though organization of sound might not be enough condition for something to be music, 4'33" fulfills that condition. Therefore, within the discourse in

which that condition is considered as sufficient for sound to be music, it is music.

But there is a problem to this. For, one could raise the difficulty concerning the identity of 4'33'' if its content is left to subjective appropriation. This would engender a complex debate about the objectivity of the art work that is being appropriated. This would not dent Cage's intention which is to give the gift of a frame and not the content. The identity of the work would not then entirely depend on the subjective appropriation but also on partly and significantly rest on the identity of the frame, the camera as well.

III

The idea of solving the puzzle, through the notion that 4'33'' is not music meets resistance. The other option is to see that 4'33'' is not silent. If it is generally accepted that the content of 4'33'' is not silence in the constitutive sense²⁰, and in the light of Cage's own realization that silence, absolute aural silence is not possible²¹, there does not seem to be much option but to consider that the "silent" in "silent music" has to be understood in some other way, which would do away with the puzzle.

When Cage denies absolute silence he is not denying the logic of silence but he denies the possibility of the experience of absolute physical silence.²² But silence which is not possible in one form is, in another form, the heart of everything that we hear. For we know that if not for silence, at least subjective silence²³, sound that is registered would not be possible. Perhaps, this is because of the duality that is ingrained in the possibility of experience. Silence is etched in the core of every sound. For, silence of one kind of sound is the very possibility of sound of another kind.²⁴ This silence has to be in part subjective for there is no objective, physical silence. When Cage, therefore, refers to 4'33'' as silent, he refers to the possibilities that that piece embodies, for it empties some kind of sound – classical musical sound.²⁵ 4'33'' is emptying, so that the periphery could come and appear where the emptying is. These reasons would seem to have solved the puzzle by revealing that "silent" in "silent music" is not silence: absolute emptiness of sound, which is counter to our intuition that music has to have sounds. Yet, this makes palpable another paradoxical aspect of 4'33''.

Cage sets out to make the point or make us realize that sound and silence are ‘co-equals’.²⁶ He sets out to liberate sound from discrimination.²⁷ Yet, this can be only through suppression. The equalization is not through privileging silence because silence cannot be privileged without suppressing sound. The puzzle that remains is the realization that silence, as an absolute concept²⁸, or the lack of sound is through the suppression objectively or psychologically of a certain kind of sound, which serves as a condition for another kind of sound to come into place. The paradox is that Cage who tries to make silence and sound co-equals can do that only at expense of sound. Silence as empty span of time does not come on its own, an agent makes it happen through an intention just as Cage does in ‘4’33’’, or the auditor (audience) does so through choosing which sounds to hear and which sound to neglect. Liberation is possible only through suppression.

IV

To the puzzle of ‘4’33’’ there can be a dissolution by accepting the puzzle. Embracing puzzles would come natural to Cage for he embraced paradoxes.²⁹ The attitude is most likely Zen inspired. D.T. Suzuki, Cage’s teacher, writes,

Zen claims to be “a specific transmission outside the scripture and to be altogether independent of verbalism,”... The masters seem to be particularly delighted to lead readers to bewilderment with their apparently irrational and often irrelevant utterances. But the fact is these utterances issue from the masters’ most kind and loving heartedness as they wish to open for their students the higher way of observing things enabling the latter to rid themselves of the entangling network of relativity.³⁰

This is in line with Retallack’s observation that Cage embraced paradoxes because of its power to breach through limitations and thus, open up new realms of possibilities. On this point she makes a distinction between contradiction and paradox.

Paradox operates outside the internal consistency of any given set of rules. It is evidence of complexity - evidence that the conditions of life will always exceed the capacity of a unitary systematic effort to contain or entirely explain them. A state

of affairs described in the mathematical world by Gödel's incompleteness theory. Contradiction takes place within closed systems, unified and coherent sets of interlocking definitions and laws. While contradiction leads to logical gridlock, shutting the system down and sending us back to ferret out our mistake, paradox reveals insufficiencies of limiting systems in a complex world, catapulting us out of system into a new realm of possibilities.³¹

Paradox is used to make a leap, to breach the confines of our conditionings and entanglements we inherit to gain a deeper understanding. According to Retallack, it provides the swerves that open up new perceptual as well as conceptual possibilities.³² It is tempting, therefore, to say that Cage intends 4'33'' to embrace paradoxes. This is relevant because the embrace lays asunder our entanglements with the received notions of what music is. 4'33'', in its paradoxical nature, breaches the confines, what is and is not music, of the received notion of music.

4'33'' changes the boundary of our understanding of music. It pushes the boundary of the concept of music. But this comes with a qualification. It pushes in some directions only. It expands some parts of the boundary and contracts in some places, leaving out some things that were inside the boundaries of the traditional understanding of music. Cage in the moments when he says that there is place for traditional music in music, and that his vision does not negate them³³, he would be accommodative of Wittgensteinian understanding of concepts.³⁴ He could be seen as introducing a face in the set of consanguine faces of music. Or rather he retraces and embosses a boundary within the already existent faces of music.

Redefinitions could be such that it contains the definition redefined. Or it could be a complete break from the thing redefined. Or it could be such that it redraws some of the boundaries. Artists engage in such redefinitions and subsequent controversies. Such redefinitions and controversies find a description in the following lines:

Arguments about what is or is not "really" music or painting (or art in general) have been endemic, particularly in the twentieth century. For many people in the early 1900s Cubism was "just" not art; for some people today, the noises assembled

by John Cage are “Just not music”; and within living memory, the status of film as a legitimate medium of artistic creation was still open to challenge. Anybody who has taken the trouble to become informed about the historical development of artistic genres and styles and their public-reception will know that these twentieth-century challenges can perfectly well be paralleled with those of earlier centuries. (Blake’s paintings at first looked like childish bungling, Beethoven’s music sounded “unmusical”, and as for the infantile versifying of Emily Dickinson,...) Indeed it seems to be in the very nature of shared artistic enterprise that creative artists in every medium are forever engaged in redrawing boundaries.³⁵

Cage redefines music with *4’33”* - if it is to be accepted as music. It redefines considering the following points. The traditional understanding of music accepted more or less what is to be counted as musical sound. *4’33”* redefines by removing that stricture. The received view is that sound is more important than silence in music. One could have music with no silence but no music just on silence. *4’33”* redefines music by making silence as important as sounds not only in the organization of music but at the constitutive level.

This redefinition and breaching of the boundaries of music, which engenders new possibilities in music also poses some problems: some of which conflicts with the assumption that is there in the making of *4’33”*. I shall consider the problem of transcribing *4’33”* and how it reveals a de-privileging of what is already under-privileged in music-making. The breaches, while enriching, deprives music of its practice. It accents hierarchy by erasing and effacing the practice of transcription which was already low in the ladder of creative importance. If it is a matter of leveling creator and auditor, it succeeds but the hierarchy within creation is deepened.

V

A composer when writing music takes creative decisions; even when a composer considers herself to be just a medium for a higher dictation. For, it would be quite a miracle if the dictation spells out even the minutest detail of the finished work. A decision is made, even if the decision is not

to make any decision and to leave decisions to chance. At some point, but not necessarily at the beginning, in the compositional process, the writer makes the decision of instrumentation.³⁶ Some music chooses its own instruments: music with lyrics inadvertently chooses voice as its instrument but the range and register of the melody shall, here again, decide for which type of voice it shall be. A composer could choose the contrary to what the music suggests, for special effects. An intimate understanding of the character, potential and limits of the media through which music is performed is a tool of the trade. Not only composers, but arrangers and transcriptionists also need this understanding.

Transcription in music refers to the art of re-presenting an existent piece of music intended for an instrument or instruments for some other instrument(s) or combination(s) of instruments. It involves technical skills as well as creative decisions. It involves the *trans*-scribing of musical scores intended by the composer for a particular instrument, instrument combinations including voice for some other medium of instruments. It is like *writing* a content *across* the barriers that differentiate instruments/musical media.³⁷ If music is a social formation, then transcriptions and transcribers are a part and parcel of that phenomenon. Transcribing is part of the activity of music which is constitutive of western music.

John Cage relates a “transcription” of 4'33''. He writes,

I have spent many pleasant hours in the woods conducting performances of my silent piece, transcriptions, that is, for an audience of myself, since they were much longer than the popular length which I have had published. At one performance, I passed the first movement by attempting the identification of a mushroom which remained successfully unidentified. The second movement was extremely dramatic, beginning with the sounds of a buck and doe leaping up within ten feet of my rocky podium... The third movement was a return to the theme of the first, but with all those profound, so-well-known alterations of world feeling associated by German tradition with the A-B-A.³⁸

Transcription is a creative act that 4'33'' seems to foreclose. The problem that I see with 4'33'' and transcription is that Cage has made transcription of 4'33'' impossible for other would be transcribers because

he has already made all possible transcriptions of it. Or is it the case that it is a piece which does not, in principle admits transcriptions? In his instruction that it can be performed on any instrument/s and for any length of time, he has made all possible transcriptions of 4'33". It is such a singular piece that the composers' performance directions empty the possibility of any transcription.

Though Cage might want to take out the authorial content from 4'33", it is pragmatically impossible. It is linked with him. When we talk about a performance of 4'33" we talk of the person who premiered it and so on. It is in transcription that Cage is very successful in effacing the creative subjectivity. It is the underprivileged position of the transcriber that is being brought lower which is the irony that one finds in 4'33". Music as defining the relationships between those involved in its institution is definitely redrawn by 4'33".

VI

I shall conclude with two short observations from the discussions above.

The first is that Cage's intention to liberate sound is not possible in the sense that it is already liberated; it never was under any oppression or suppression. It is not ours to liberate sound. Only our ways of thinking about sound could be liberated. If that is the case then perhaps Davies is right in saying that 4'33" is not music but theatre, a performance no doubt. Another thing is that the idea of doing away with hierarchies in music, that is, the hierarchy between sounds and silence on one hand and the hierarchies between sounds is traced in 4'33". Yet, the intention to curb hierarchy between the social formation of the institute of music that is the privileged composer, and the lesser privileged performer and the under-labourer transcriptionist is not subverted by 4'33" but rather accentuated and deepened by it.

Are we ready to redraw the boundary of music, as Cage has attempted, and accept the consequences? Cage asked us to be bold and pay the price.³⁹ Are we ready and willing to pay the price? Though Cage redraws and enriches in ways what music is, his project blows inside out. Instead of instituting anarchy, his project instead reveals a hierarchy, which was existent, and now reinforced. Whether 4'33" is music or not is a controversy which might not come to an end. And it should be that

way, and Cage would have intended it that way.⁴⁰ But it somehow reveals a paradox which is not a puzzle that goads us to make the leap but something that deprives, instead of being something that liberates.

Notes and References

- 1 In Retallack's words, "The musical composition that always remained Cage's favorite (despite the fact that he was against having favorites) was 4'33" ", in Joan Retallack's introduction to the book which she co-authored with John Cage (1996, p. xxxiii.)
- 2 "To Whom It May Concern: The White Paintings came first, my silent piece came later" (Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 1961). Cage acknowledges that Rauschenberg's white canvasses, which treat silence visually, came before his silent piece. He made the above remark in the introductory note to the essay *On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and his works*. See, (Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 1961). Another reference in the same book in endearing terms is found on page 276: "I have spent many pleasant hours in the wood conducting performances of my silent piece..."
- 3 " "4'33", the silent piece, is easily John Cage's famous creation...the springboard for a thousand analyses and arguments;..." (Pritchett, 2013).
- 4 The names of the three movements are simply the roman numerals I, II and III, as per the Kremen Score "Tacet". Regarding the internal division of the duration of 4'33", Cage suggested that it be determined by a chance procedure. But it is worthwhile to keep in mind, in this consideration, that duration of 4'33" can be of any length – it need not be 4'33". For discussions on this aspect of 4'33", (Fetterman, 1996) could be referred.
- 5 See, Kania, 2010.
- 6 See, the reprints in Chapter 4 of Fetterman (1996).
- 7 See, Fetterman, 1996.
- 8 See, Fetterman, 1996, p. 79.
- 9 One evidence that could be cited as evidence for this observation is a remark from the Forward to his book *A Year From Monday* (1967, p. ix). "The reason I am less and less interested in music is not only that, I find environmental sounds and noises more useful aesthetically than the sounds produced by the world's musical cultures, when you get down to it, a composer is simply someone who tells other people what to do. I find this an unattractive way of getting things done. I'd like our activities to be more

- social and anarchically so.” This is a clear indication that he wanted to do away with the privileged and authority that we give to the composer in music making. Note also Retallack’s comment “He envisioned, and wrote music for, an ensemble or orchestra without a conductor, without a soloist, without a hierarchy of musicians: an orchestra in which each musician is, in the Buddhist manner, a unique center in interpenetrating and non-obstructive harmony with every other musician” (1996, p. xxx). Dovetail this with Cage’s own remark, “...you can think of the piece of music as a representation of a society in which you would like to live” (1990, p. 178).
- 10 The Medieval Philosophers had the concept of Supposition. The supposition of glass in the statement “Drink another glass” is not a glass but the content of that glass. This peculiar usage gives rise to a puzzle, which is dissolved as soon as the supposition of glass is made clear.
 - 11 Davies’s classification of *4’33”* is clear from his remark in (2003, p. 26), “I characterized *4’33”* above as a ‘happening’. This provides the clue to its proper classification: as an artwork it is a piece of theater. It is not a work of musical theater, such as opera, but a performance piece about music.” This remark of Davies is buttressed by Cage’s intention: “My intention has been, often, to say what I had to say in a way that would exemplify it; that would, conceivably, permit the listener to experience what I had to say rather than just hear about it. This means that, being as I am engaged in a variety of activities, I attempt to introduce into each one of them aspects conventionally limited to one or more of the others” (1961, p. ix).
 - 12 Cage (1961, p. 3) writes, “If this word “music” is sacred and reserved for eighteenth-and nineteenth-century instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: Organization of sound.” He acknowledges that the composer Edgard Varèse has defined music as “organized sound”, in his essay on the composer (1961, p. 83).
 - 13 Refer “...the intentions of these noisy audience members do not stand in the appropriate relation to the instructions used in Cage’s score, which, afterall, prescribes that the performers be silent” (Davies, 2003, p. 21). Though this is in the context of the issue whether the audiences are the performers, the assumption that Davies makes for someone to be called a performer and the relation that the person should have with the content of the piece is clear.
 - 14 E.H. Margulis (2007) explores five functions of silence: silence as boundary, silence as interruption, silence as a revealer of the inner ear, silence as a promoter of meta-listening and silence as communicator. On the basis of these distinctions of silence, one could ask whether Davies has been too swift in dismissing that silence cannot have content.

- 15 One could draw from Levinson's (2011) analysis of the concept of music, which is human-centered and human-intended to be such, that choosing the ambience itself might satisfy a necessary attribute of being of music.
- 16 This minimal relation is satisfied by Cage's conception of music. The composer and the performer "resemble the maker of a camera who allows someone else to take the picture." (1961, p. 11) Here, a minimal relation could be argued for in the sense that the composer and the performer have a relation to the picture through the camera she makes.
- 17 This seems to be the "intention" of Cage in 4'33" at least in the remark he made. "It is like a glass of milk. We need the glass and we need the milk. Or again it is like an empty glass into which at any moment anything may be poured" (1961, p. 110). (The line is originally written in mesostics has been rendered here without it.)
- 18 See Kania, 2010.
- 19 "...I agree that perception is inherently structure imputing, so that Cage's recommendation that we should perceive impersonally, aconceptually, rejecting appearance of organization, form and structure, loses its grip on the notion of perception" (Davies, 2003, pp. 15-16). That Cage recommended subjective structuring is found in such remarks as "We are not in these dances and music, saying something. We are simple-minded enough to think if we were saying something we would use words. We are rather doing something. The meaning of what we do is determined by each one who sees and hears it" (1961, p. 94).
- 20 There is general agreement, among philosophers at least, that 4'33" is not a silent piece of music, though there is disagreement with respect to both what it is and the arguments that establish its correct categorization.
- 21 The following remark of Cage stands in support of this point. "There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear" (1961, p. 9).
- 22 Cage denies the possibility of the experience of absolute physical silence. This he came to profess after an experience in an anechoic chamber. This technological contraption supposedly removes all sounds. It is a sort of a vacuum for sound. But this vacuum is only a vacuum for sound external to us. Those sounds which are part of our physiology become pronounced in such chambers. So, there is the impossibility of silence, of a physical kind. Though there is plausibly no physical object in rest, the concept of rest is needed for the concept of motion. An analogy could be drawn with the remark that silence is physically, naturally impossible but logically needed and *a fortiori* logically possible.

- 23 By subjective silence, I mean the kind of filtering that takes place when we focus on a particular sound(s) or when we register a particular sound(s). There may be a multitude of sounds objectively in the environment of the auditor and heard to other auditors in the same environment, but the filtering that is referred here silences many of those sounds, which makes the possibility of some sounds in the environment to be heard.
- 24 Cage seems to have a general theory about the other of something as its ground when he says that “This is a talk about something and naturally also a talk about nothing. About how something and nothing are not opposed to each other but need each other to keep on going” (1961, p. 129). The quoted line is originally in columns, which is not retained here.
- 25 While writing on the music of Varèse, Cage endorses the bringing in of noise as an element of music (1961, p. 84).
- 26 See Pritchett (2013) “That summer, he delivered a lecture at Black Mountain College in which, for the first time, he started that sound and silence were co-equals in music, and that musical structure should be based on duration because this was the sole characteristic that these two had in common.”
- 27 Cage had the vision of liberating sound, re-making sound as sound. To this end silence helps for it liberates sound. The aim is in the lineage of freeing music from the shackles of tonality, which his teacher Schoenberg was engaged in. 4’33” is a logical development of this question of “freeing” music. How does silence liberate sound? Silence, musical silence liberates the sound which has been underprivileged (sound which are not produced from “musical” instruments), which has been suppressed as unworthy of our attention. The silence of the privileged frees and gives possibility of the suppressed (for example, the sound that is made by the opening of a chocolate bar that someone in the audience is in the process of eating discreetly) to express.
- 28 Absolute concepts are concepts which are negative concepts expressed as the lack of something.
- 29 Remarks such as “Having made the empty canvases (A canvas is never empty.) Rauschenberg became the giver of gifts” (Cage, 1961, p. 103), or “Any attempt to exclude the “irrational” is irrational. Any composing strategy which is wholly “rational” is irrational in the extreme” (Cage, 1961, p. 62), would suggest such an observation.
- 30 From T.D. Suzuki’s Introduction to *A Flower Does Not Talk: Zen Essays* by Zenkei Shibayama (1970).
- 31 Cage & Retallack, 1996, p. xxvi.

- 32 Cage & Retallack, 1996, p. xxxiii.
- 33 He says, "In this way, the past and the present are to be observed and each person makes what he alone must make, bringing for the whole of human society into existence a historical fact, and then , on and on, in continuum and discontinuum" (1961, p. 75).
- 34 By Wittgensteinian understanding of concepts, I am making reference to Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept 'game' in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), which shows the limitations of the classical understanding of concepts in terms of a definitional analysis. § 66-71 could be referred.
- 35 Toulmin, Rieke, & Janik, 1979, p. 271.
- 36 This process of decision making in some of Cage's later works is made on the basis of chance operations. It is obviously done to do away with making decisions. How successful this idea could be to efface the composer's decision making, is a question worth asking.
- 37 For a detailed account of the ontology of musical transcriptions one could refer to Stephen (Davies, 2003, pp. 47-59). I shall highlight some of the relevant observations of Davies about transcriptions here. 1) transcriptions are transcriptions of musical works 2) transcriptions are creative acts. I add to these the idea that transcriptions are an important part of the sociology of music and musical traditions.
- 38 Cage, 1961, p. 276.
- 39 If we are to be open to the future of music we have to be fearless about where it will take us. "But this fearlessness only follows if, at the parting of the ways, where it is realized that sounds occur whether intended or not, one turns in the direction of those he does not intend. This turning is psychological and seems at first to be giving up everything that belongs to humanity-for a musician, the giving up of music. This psychological turning leads to the world of nature, where, gradually or suddenly, one sees that humanity and nature, no separate, are in this world together, that nothing was lost when everything was given away. In fact everything is gained. In musical terms, any sounds may occur in any combination and in any continuity" (Cage, 1961, p. 8). The price we have to pay is to give up our conditionings and the conditioned desires.
- 40 This is said with some reservations considering the remark "I don't give these lectures to surprise people, but out of a need for poetry" Self-citation in (Cage, 1961, p. x).

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