

John Cage

Early Piano Music

Herbert Henck: piano

ECM New Series 1844

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A musicologist, announcing his intention to lecture on “John Cage’s style” received from the composer the wry response: “You have a problem. There are so many.”

Few composers can have adopted the mantle of musical pioneer more enthusiastically than Cage. Whenever the “danger” of his music being accepted arose, he at once attempted to take it to the place “where it would not be accepted”, always insisting that his favourite music was the music not yet heard. The main thing was to keep moving. An *enfant terrible* and finally a *père terrible* of successive avant-gardes, Cage successively challenged all the parameters of music-making, leaving an often bewildering variety of compositions behind him.

In the last decades of his life – Cage died in 1992 – most critics, and many fellow musicians, had abandoned the attempt to keep pace with John Cage, finding it more convenient to consider him a musical philosopher than to wrestle with the implications of the ever-changing work. It became popular to read Cage in such still-illuminating books as “Silence”, “A Year From Monday”, “M” or “For The Birds”, sooner than listen to him. But re-evaluations are taking place today as time inevitably mutes the revolutionary impact of the work.

Two years ago, ECM New Series issued Herbert Henck’s account of Cage’s “Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano” (1946-8), widely considered to be a benchmark recording of this important work. Now Henck re-examines some of the other inventions of the young Cage, piano pieces written by the American composer between 1935 and 1948.

The oldest of these pieces here is “Quest”, apparently the second half of a two movement work. Along with the early “Two Pieces for Piano” and “Metamorphosis”, this gives us the clearest idea of Cage as a composer still in thrall to the work and ideas of Arnold Schönberg. (The extent of Cage’s studies with Schönberg has never been verified to the satisfaction of music historians, but it seems fairly certain that Cage at least attended Schönberg’s courses at the University of Los Angeles in the summer of 1935, if not the two years of tuition he subsequently claimed.) These are pieces still based on tone-rows.

“Ophelia” (1946) is dedicated to dancer and choreographer Jean Erdman with whom Cage often worked. Henck writes: “Ophelia” is one of Cage’s most sensually appealing piano pieces in every way. Inclining towards the dance style of Jean Erdman, it is often lively with marked rhythms.”

“The Seasons” (1947) gets its second airing on ECM in the Henck piano rendition. The American Composers Orchestra, under the direction of Dennis Russell Davies, previously recorded it – using the orchestral arrangement Cage prepared together with Lou Harrison and Virgil Thomson – on ECM New Series 1696. It’s an important piece, marking the beginning of Cage’s interest in Eastern thought. At the time of its composition, Cage, then 35, was immersing himself in the religious philosophy of both West and East – studying Meister Eckhardt as well as Sri Ramakrishna and Ananada Coomaraswamy and considering the points of contact between the diverse traditions of Christian mysticism, Buddhism and Hinduism (but he was still four years away from his important studies in Zen with D.T. Suzuki). He was also studying Indian music and becoming increasingly convinced that the function of music was – as many Indian philosophers had insisted – “to quiet the mind and render it susceptible to divine influence.”

“In A Landscape” (1948) also makes a second appearance on ECM, having previously been incorporated into Alexei Lubimov’s recital disc “Der Bote”. Since it follows a group of pieces called “Imaginary Landscape” it is highly likely the title is a Cagean pun on “Inner Landscape”. It was premiered at Black Mountain College in North Carolina where Cage scandalized the faculty by proposing to the students that Satie was a superior composer to Beethoven. The poetic simplicity of Erik Satie was very much on Cage’s mind at the time (the French composer was to be a lifelong influence). Gently undulating, quietly unpredictable, the case can be made that Cage’s “In A Landscape” is a cousin to Satie’s “Gymnopédies”. It is a highly attractive composition as are all these instances of John Cage’s early piano music.

Press reactions to Herbert Henck’s recording of Cage’s “Sonatas and Interludes” on “Locations” (ECM New Series 1842/3):

“Herbert Henck invests this music with every ounce of his meticulous musicianship and technical finish, remaining fully attuned to Cages poetic impulses and rhythmic momentum.”

Jed Distler, BBC Music Magazine

“Henck’s performance of the ‘Sonatas and Interludes’ is a delightfully subtle one: finely nuanced, honed to precision, lucidly intelligent as in all the best renditions of the work, his preparations to the piano of scintillating effect, helping to make the rhythms both purposeful and aurally apprehensible. Henck makes the work speak to the body, which is to say he makes it dance.”

Christopher Ballantine, International Record Review

“Herbert Henck’s account is constantly alive to the rhythmic variety of Cage’s keyboard writing and relishing every exotic colour that Cage’s meticulous doctoring of the piano tone extracts from the instrument.”

Andrew Clements, The Guardian

Herbert Henck was born in Treysa, Germany, in 1948. In concerts he plays almost exclusively 20th century music about which he has written several books and numerous essays. His books include “Stockhausens Klavierstück X“ (1976), “Reise nach Lateinamerika“ (1988), “Experimentelle Pianistik“ (1994), and “Fürsprache für Hauer“ (1998). From 1980 to 1985 he published, under his own imprint, a five-volume series of yearbooks called “Neuland/Ansätze zur Musik der Gegenwart”.

Henck's previous New Series recordings have received the highest praise from international critics. Of his Barraqué album, leading German critic Peter Cossé wrote (in *Klassik Heute*): “I do not hesitate to praise this recording as one of the very greatest discographical achievements.” The disc received the Diapason d'Or in France, was Classic CD Choice of the Month in England, and was singled out by the New York Times as emblematic of ECM's current directions. Herbert Henck’s reading of Hans Otte’s “Das Buch der Klänge” meanwhile, was used in the soundtrack of Jean-Luc Godard’s film “De l’origine du XXIème siècle”.

Further New Series recordings with Herbert Henck are in preparation.

CD package includes 26-page German-English booklet with liner notes by Herbert Henck, and portrait photos of John Cage by Roberto Masotti.

Piano. This is not my music, credits to alfiegalley12 for original, this is a re upload with lyrics. Enjoy! Edelweiss - Sound of Music for EASY Piano. StratfordMusic. pro.Â Hit the Road Jack for easy piano. Music by Percy Mayfield Performed by Ray Charles, 1961. Aranged by Sveta.dp.ua. PD. Free Sheet Music for piano to download and print for early intermediate piano players, level 3 piano students.Â All rights reserved, USA Site Map. Be the first to hear when new music is added by following us on. Facebook. Free Piano Sheet Music Free Lead Sheets How to play Piano Piano Chord Diagrams Piano Tutorials. Go to: [Level 1](#) [Level 2](#) [Level 3](#) [Intermediate & Advanced](#). Go to: [Level 1](#) [Level 2](#) [Level 3](#) [Intermediate & Advanced](#). Your source for free piano sheet music, lead sheets & piano tutorials. The modern form of the piano, which emerged in the late 19th century, is a very different instrument from the pianos for which earlier classical piano literature was originally composed. The modern piano has a heavy metal frame, thick strings made of top-grade steel, and a sturdy action with a substantial touch weight. These changes have created a piano with a powerful tone that carries well in large halls, and which produces notes with a very long sustain time. The contrast with earlier instruments