

SYNERGY THROUGH SENSATION:  
THE UNITING POWER OF COLOR AND SOUND FOR  
AVANT-GARDE VISUAL ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS

Justin Curto

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A new world hangs outside the window,  
beautiful and strange.  
It must be:  
I've fallen awake.  
I must be  
sound and color—with me, for my mind.

—Alabama Shakes, “Sound and Color”

John Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (Figure 1) is one of his most ambitious and interesting works: a collection of parts for up to fourteen different instrumentalists to be played in part or whole. Composed from 1957 to 1958, it spans sixty-three pages and eighty-four compositional types, and performers can individually choose to play any sections of their part in any order. The only rule to follow is time—the spacing of the compositional marks corresponds to duration, and the conductor must keep time for the performers by mimicking the second hand on a clock with their arms.<sup>1</sup>

Given the work's scale and fascination, scholars often neglect the context of the music, which is interesting in its own right. The experimental composer dedicated his composition to Elaine de Kooning, the abstract expressionist portrait artist later known for painting John F. Kennedy's presidential portrait.<sup>2</sup> A longtime friend of the composer, de Kooning met Cage at the creative hotbed of Black Mountain College in summer 1948. Cage and the choreographer Merce Cunningham, his collaborator and romantic partner, helmed a production of Erik Satie's *Le piège de Méduse*, and de Kooning played Medusa and designed sets for the play.<sup>3</sup> She and her husband, the painter Willem de Kooning, stayed friends with Cage and Cunningham through the mid-century New York creative scene. In 1962, she painted a portrait of Cunningham.<sup>4</sup>

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1. John Cage, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (Glendale, NY: Edition Peters, 1958).

2. Amy Pastan, "Elaine de Kooning's JFK," National Portrait Gallery, published 13 March 2015, [npg.si.edu/blog/elaine-de-koonings-jfk](https://npg.si.edu/blog/elaine-de-koonings-jfk)

3. "Elaine de Kooning," Guggenheim, accessed 30 November 2018, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/elaine-de-kooning>

4. Elaine de Kooning, *Merce Cunningham*, 1962, Oil on canvas, Washington, DC, National Portrait Gallery, accessed 30 November 2018, <https://npg.si.edu/blog/portrait-merce-cunningham-elaine-de-kooning>.

What led Elaine de Kooning to commission a piece from Cage? Simply put, as a member of the cross-disciplinary New York School during the mid-twentieth century, she was intrigued by what her fellow artists were doing. She may not have known much about music, but she wanted to have her own piece. It was Cage who decided it would be one of the biggest works of his career.<sup>5</sup> Such an interaction, let alone a relationship, between visual artist and musician would have hardly been possible fifty years ago in Paris, then the widely regarded center of the avant-garde artistic universe. Movements like Impressionism and Surrealism in late Nineteenth and early twentieth-century Paris largely excluded musicians, maintaining a divide in avant-garde art between fields thought to be visually representative (e.g. visual art and literature) and fields thought to not be visually representative (i.e. music).<sup>6</sup> Only non-visually representative artists—that is, abstract artists—could break down this divide, as evidenced by their rewarding relationships with experimental musicians.

Their work related across fields through a common fascination with sensations, like color and sound, as opposed to visual art's dominant focus on the Heideggerian "thing." The first prominent example of such a relationship arises between the abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky and the experimental composer Arnold Schoenberg through the *Blue Rider* group; later exchanges flourished in the New York School, among them Cage's aforementioned friendship with De Kooning, Cage's collaborative relationship with abstract expressionist artist Robert Rauschenberg and experimental composer Morton Feldman's inspiration from abstract

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5. Ryan Dohoney, "The work of realization—Tudor and the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*," class lecture, "Composer Topics: John Cage," Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 13 February 2018.

6. This refers to the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, in which a field is an autonomous arena of interactions between agents who follow certain "rules of the game" to accumulate a type of capital. This will be elaborated in the following section.

expressionist painter Mark Rothko. Their cross-field collaborations created avant-garde alliances like the *Blue Rider* group and New York School, which gave the artists larger platforms for their messages, despite the perceived inaccessibility of abstract and experimental work.

### **The Exclusion of Music in Avant-Garde Movements**

Art history shows that the avant-garde began with painting, tracing back to the 1863 Salon des Refusés. In *Modern Art: A Very Short Introduction*, David Cottington argues this was the inciting incident for modern art. The Salon was the annual showcase of the best art Paris had to offer—best, of course, as in conforming to the artistic standards of the academy. When Napoleon III opened the Salon des Refusés, he gave a prominent, sanctioned platform to works that challenged what constituted art.<sup>7</sup> Édouard Manet’s *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* epitomized this outlook through the painting’s flat style, its figures’ contemporary outfits, the woman’s gaze directed at the viewer. As Cottington writes, “the painting mocks both old master art and its audience.”<sup>8</sup> Further, he argues nothing was more situated to first do this than painting: “The specificities of *painting* – as a medium, as a practice, as a visual experience – need to be taken into account in any representation of the visible world that it offers.”<sup>9</sup> “Visual experience” stands out here for being situated a prerequisite to commentary on the modern world in the way that avant-garde art does. The movement soon widened to include sculpture, then as writers like Walter Benjamin and André Breton began grappling with modernity, literature and criticism folded into the avant-garde as well.

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7. David Cottington, *Modern Art: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17.

8. Cottington, 13.

9. Cottington, 13-14.

The avant-garde prized the ability to say something about the modern world. Painters and sculptors did this by representing that world in ways that challenged it, writers and poets by critiquing and commenting on its ideas through their words. Most music at the time, though, had no ability to make this happen, unless combined with theatre through opera or ballet, such as Igor Stravinsky's incendiary folk-influenced ballet *The Rite of Spring*.<sup>10</sup> This contributed to its exclusion from avant-garde art movements at the time—the artists and writers of those movements thought it was unable to do the same things they were doing.

### *Different Media as Different Fields*

The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu conceives of the world as an association of “fields.” These are autonomous structures in which agents interact as players in a game, working to earn a type of capital by playing within certain rules, or habitus. Fields are similar but separate, like the economic field, political field, and cultural field, and organized in a hierarchy to comprise a social formation. In his theory, a field like the cultural field operates outside economic and political forces, because those affect the economic and political fields.<sup>11</sup>

In the cultural field, Bourdieu says, there are two important types of capital to seek. There is symbolic capital, or being known for one's work in the cultural field, and then there is cultural capital, or being able to understand and appreciate cultural works. These types of capital can be thought of, though, in the same way as economic capital, in that they contribute to class differences through inequalities.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Bryan R. Simms, “Avant-Garde Compositions in France and Russia,” in *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer Cengage Learning, 1996), 95.

11. Randal Johnson, introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, by Pierre Bourdieu (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 6.

12. Johnson, 7.

Visual art, then, can be understood as a field. Artists, dealers, collectors, curators, and critics all work toward a type of symbolic capital—for the artist, to be known for their work; for the others, to be known for their tastes and for championing that artist—while simultaneously gaining cultural capital through this pursuit, and attempting to gain economic capital. Writers, literary agents, publishers and critics fulfill similar roles in the field of literature, working to The audience, in this case readers, generally plays more of a role in the literary field, because if a writer wants to sell a novel, they not only have to accumulate symbolic capital among agents and publishers, but also among readers themselves. Otherwise, the two fields seem fairly similar at a glance.

Music can also be understood as its own field. Composers, performers, concert directors, and publishers also work to accrue symbolic capital, and accumulate cultural capital along the way. Listeners buying concert tickets also play a role more akin to readers buying books. Yet the musical field has somewhat of a different habitus—the key to symbolic capital is not just selling one’s music once to a publisher, but ensuring it continues to be performed. Owning a piece of music, after all, does not provide the same immediate experience one has by owning a painting or a book. Music is not a permanent physical thing, but a fleeting, intangible experience. Since the fields of visual art and literature have similar habituses, this gives an explanation of why artists and writers in the Impressionist and Surrealist movements so quickly banded together, leaving musicians largely out of their movements.

*Music in Impressionism: The Myths of Maître and Debussy*

It has been widely documented that “Impressionism” first intended to refer to painters—after viewing the painting *Impression, soleil levant* by Claude Monet, whose work was at the

forefront of the movement, the art critic Louis Leroy derided his work as “impressions.”<sup>13</sup> It makes sense that the movement came together as such, given that Impressionism was chiefly concerned with seeing. Instead of painting the world directly as it was seen, Impressionists wanted to challenge perceptions by painting the world through a certain lens, using noticeable brushstrokes and paying special attention to light to try to capture a specific moment in the day. And nineteenth-century social life centered around the visual—the flâneur/euse culture understood living in the city as watching and being watched—so by changing their visual representations, these painters critiqued society.<sup>14</sup>

Equally revolutionary, though, was the network that the Impressionist movement created. Ostracized by major institutions and critics, the Impressionist painters found solidarity in numbers, and brought the writers and critics sympathetic to their cause into the fold. It marked the first time that avant-garde artists developed relationships, drew inspiration from one another, and collaborated in such a group—since previously, individual work was regarded as the best way to preserve and develop the artistic self.<sup>15</sup> Impressionism, though, celebrated the group dynamic, as illustrated by some of Henri Fantin-Latour’s paintings of Impressionist gatherings. Fantin-Latour does not quite fall into the Impressionist style; while he was friends with Manet and looked up to the painter, his own works leaned toward what the art historian Atsushi Miura calls “cognitive” realism, expressing reality while simultaneously calling it into question.<sup>16</sup> As a

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13. Hollis Clayson, “A Revolution in Politics, A Revolution in Art: Impressionism and the Republic,” class lecture, “French Politics, Culture, and Society,” Northwestern University/Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, France, 21 September 2018.

14. Clayson, “Impressionism and the Republic.”

15. Clayson, “Impressionism and the Republic.”

16. Atsushi Miura, “The Pictorial World of Henri Fantin-Latour,” in *Histoires de Peinture Entre France et Japon* (University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy: Tokyo, 2009), 90, PDF, <https://bibliotecamathom.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/essays-on-actions-and-events.pdf>.

portrait artist, he disdained commissions because of the control they allowed the subjects, so most of his portraits were of friends and associates. Among these, he is known for his group portraits of artists, including his 1870 painting *Un Atelier aux Batignolles* (Figure 2), a document of the Impressionist inner circle that won third prize at that year's Salon.<sup>17</sup>

In the painting, he depicts prominent Impressionist associates watching as Manet paints a portrait of the critic Zacharie Astruc. Other featured painters include Impressionists Auguste Renoir, Frédéric Bazille, and Monet, and the Impressionist-aligned German painter Otto Scholderer. Another writer is present at the scene along with Astruc: the novelist Émile Zola, who wrote about many Impressionist paintings in the Salons as an art critic and carried Impressionist themes into his novels, including his 1886 work *The Masterpiece*, which fictionalizes the founding of Impressionism.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, there is Edmond Maître, dwarfed by Bazille in the corner of the painting. Maître can be called a musician in the sense that he played piano, but he was widely regarded as an amateur, and these circles knew him better as collector of Impressionist artworks.<sup>19</sup>

As a painter, Fantin-Latour did appreciate music; he painted his friends after all, and his 1885 painting *Autour du Piano* features a number of musicians including Maître once again. However, as previously noted, Fantin-Latour was not an Impressionist painter—and he definitely did not want to be categorized as such. By the time he painted *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*, he was concerned about Manet's visible steps toward Impressionism and may not have wanted to be

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17. Henri Fantin-Latour, *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*, 1870, oil on canvas, 204 by 273.5 c.m., Paris, Musée d'Orsay.

18. M. Douglas Kimball, "Emile Zola and French Impressionism," *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 23, no. 2 (June 1969), 52.

19. Miura, "The Pictorial World," 111.

featured in the portrait himself to avoid being associated with the Impressionists.<sup>20</sup> He differed from the painters topically by refusing to paint landscapes and technically by emphasizing color over brightness. (He also shared the view, often used as an insult to Impressionists at the time, that the paintings seemed “unfinished.”)<sup>21</sup> He focused on color in an attempt to evoke the spirit in his work—taken with his noted interest in music, this calls to mind Kandinsky’s similar focus on spirituality through color and sounds decades later.

When Fantin-Latour painted the artists and writers in *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*, in the beginning years of Impressionism, the composer Claude Debussy was just a child. Born in 1862, Debussy is often cited as the preeminent composer of the Impressionist movement in music. In a study of the rise of the term “Impressionism” to describe music, the musicologist Ronald L. Byrnside finds that when it was first used, it almost solely described Debussy and his work.<sup>22</sup> This may have occurred because of a difficulty to classify Debussy’s work, he writes, noting that many volumes that do not describe Debussy as an Impressionist still distinguish his music as of a separate movement.<sup>23</sup> Reviewing Debussy’s opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Camille Mauclair wrote that describing his work as Impressionist is “vague, inexact, and hazardous,”<sup>24</sup> and later, when reviewing *La Mer*, that Impressionism “should no longer be used in historical criticism for designating a movement that has disappeared.”<sup>25</sup> Byrnside uses these reviews to illustrate two issues with Debussy’s classification as Impressionist. First, as Byrnside finds in his research, few writers at the time or since have put forth a clear definition of musical Impressionism, instead

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20. Miura, 104.

21. Miura, 117-118.

22. Ronald L. Byrnside, “Musical Impressionism: The Early History of the Term,” *The Musical Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (October 1980), 526.

23. Byrnside, 529.

24. Byrnside, 530.

25. Byrnside, 532.

situating it as analogous to the movement in painting. More importantly, though, as critics labeled Debussy's operas and orchestral pieces "Impressionist," the movement had already left the art world. Debussy had little to no exchange with Impressionist greats like Monet or Renoir, and never truly referred to the artistic movement as an influence. This starkly contrasts with the partnerships between Kandinsky and Schoenberg, Cage and Rauschenberg, and Feldman and Rothko, where the painters and musicians worked in the same time periods and drew direct influence from each other's works. Meanwhile, for Debussy, an association with Impressionism does not enrich an understanding of his music but instead simplifies it. As Byrnside concludes, "This prejudice, which filters his music through painting, gives rise to the practice of reading things into Debussy's music which may not be there at all and of obscuring other things which are there and which are crucial to a true understanding of his uniqueness and individuality."<sup>26</sup> This stands opposed to the relationships and collaborations that later developed between abstract painters and experimental musicians, in which the art and music can provide a holistic understanding of each other when taken together.

*A Surrealist Music: "Silence Is Golden"*

Surrealism followed Impressionism just a few decades later as another prominent avant-garde artistic movement to bring together visual artists and writers. The ideas and works coming out of Surrealism were united by the central role of the imagination and unconscious mind, meant to lead the audience to question reality in a critique of societal values and conditions. Surrealism, though, came together not with painters but with writers, most prominently Breton, who wrote his first "Manifesto of Surrealism" in 1924.

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26. Byrnside, 537.

A few aspects of Breton “defining [Surrealism] once and for all” in the manifesto stand out for their relation to music. Surrealism, he writes, is “psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought.”<sup>27</sup> Undisputedly, he intended for the movement to be foremost literary. “Any other manner,” though, should refer to all other artistic media: visual arts, performance, music. He goes on, however, to say that “Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought.”<sup>28</sup> This establishes Surrealism as chiefly visual. Humans primarily think, after all, with images and words; this is why the psychologist Jean Piaget centered his evaluations of cognitive development on images and language. When Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis who fascinated many Surrealists, writes about dreams, he refers to “scenes” and “symbols,” both terms that relate to visuals.<sup>29</sup> Even though humans do think about and remember sounds, it is clear that sound was not the primary concern of Surrealism.

Three years after Breton published his first manifesto, he published the essay collection *Surrealisme et la Peinture*, further laying out the scope of his movement. A line from the introduction is often cited to demonstrate Breton’s disdain for music: “So may night continue to fall upon the orchestra,” he famously wrote, “and may I, who am still searching for something in this world, may I be left with open or closed eyes in broad daylight, to my silent

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27. André Breton, “Manifesto of Surrealism (1924),” in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor Paperbacks: Ann Arbor, 1969), 26.

28. Breton, 26.

29. Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2001), 2.

contemplation.”<sup>30</sup> A few lines before, though, Breton contextualizes his opinion by positioning sound and sight as opposed. “Auditive images, in fact, are inferior to visual images not only in clearness but also in strictness, and . . . they hardly seem intended to strengthen in any way the idea of human greatness.”<sup>31</sup> This should not be interpreted as such a direct attack on music, though, as the historian Martin Jay argues. Surrealism as a whole wanted to move away from the poetic style of Symbolism, in which “the *ear* had decided the quality of poetry: rhythm, sonority, cadence, alliteration, rhyme,” as claimed by Ivan Goll and the editors of *Surréalisme* in 1924.<sup>32</sup> Logically, the eye should replace the ear, and as Surrealism further developed, its thinkers proposed concepts such as Breton’s *jamais vu*, or virginal sight.<sup>33</sup> It was not only that sound and audition were inadequate, but that the visual was superior.

Given that Surrealism began as a literary movement, placing such a high value on the visual set the perfect stage for writers and visual artists to develop relationships, draw on each other’s work, and even blend their media. The first section of Breton’s novel *Nadja* describes relationships with other such artists and the art they consumed as a significant part in the life of the narrator, a Surrealist writer based on Breton, if not Breton himself. He sees Tristan Tzara’s play *Coeur à Barbe* with fellow Surrealist poet Paul Éluard,<sup>34</sup> talks with Surrealist-adjacent painter Pablo Picasso at the premiere of Guillaume Apollinaire’s play *Couleur du Temps*,<sup>35</sup> and

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30. André Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (London, 1972), 1-2, quoted in Martin Jay, “The Disenchantment of the Eye,” in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R., 1990-1994*, ed. Lucien Taylor (New York: Routledge, 1994), 186, Google Books, <https://books.google.fr/books?id=3CDKAgAAQBAJ>.

31. Breton, 1-2, quoted in Jay, 186.

32. Ivan Goll, “Manifeste du Surréalisme,” *Surréalisme* 1 (October 1924), 1, quoted in Jay, 184. Jay notes that Goll and Breton rarely interacted, if ever, showing that the Surrealist sentiment against music extended beyond Breton.

33. Jay, “Disenchantment of the Eye,” 184.

34. André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 18.

35. Breton, 24.

goes to the movie theater with Surrealist writer Jacques Vaché;<sup>36</sup> on top of this, the entire novel is an intermedia Surrealist work featuring photography by artists including Surrealist photographer Man Ray.<sup>37</sup> Yet music is never mentioned in the pages of *Nadja*, further evidencing Breton's views on the form.

There very well could have been a Surrealist music. The composer George Antheil considered himself the sole exception to Surrealism's stance on music, and worked with Breton and the poet Louis Aragon on an opera, *Faust III*. Yet composer Anne LeBaron argues that Antheil "never seems to fully exploit the techniques of collage and automatism so indispensable to many Surrealist writers and artists."<sup>38</sup> Taking Antheil as sort of exception to the rule of excluding music from Surrealism, along with his work's more subdued Surrealist qualities, it seems more accurate to view him as a composer adjacent to Surrealism rather than a truly Surrealist composer.

Decades after his initial writings on music, in 1944, Breton wrote an article published in the music magazine *Modern Music* called "Silence Is Golden," widely considered to be the Surrealist reversal on music. He kept a slightly condescending tone regarding the form, but wrote of "the necessity for a re-casting of certain principles of the two arts," as in poetry and music.<sup>39</sup> "Poet and musician will degenerate if they persist in acting as though these two forces were never to be brought together again," he continued, but added that this must go further than setting

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36. Breton, 37.

37. Breton, 26.

38. Anne LeBaron, "Reflections of Surrealism in Postmodern Musics," in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York: Routledge, 2002), 32, Google Books, <https://books.google.fr/books?id=VWNHAQAAQBAJ>.

39. André Breton, "Silence Is Golden," trans. Louise Varèse, *Modern Music* 21, no. 3 (March 1944), 151.

poetry to music.<sup>40</sup> Yet for Breton, this new stance in favor of music is largely just a corrective for his former views. He had grown to favor jazz, and when he visited New York in the early 1940s, he met John Cage. His work, though, turned more toward politics and never realized his goal to “re-unify hearing” in the same way as the Surrealists had done for vision.<sup>41</sup> Even by the time Breton did change course on music, Kandinsky had left behind a body of work that laid the foundation for musical-visual collaboration, and abstract expressionism and experimentalism had already taken root in New York to continue the collaborative practice.

### **Conceptualizing the Medium of Music**

As previously explained through Bourdieu’s concept of the field, the visually representative forms of art and literature seem to have more in common than the non-visually representative form of music. This goes beyond fields, however, to the form of music itself. The aesthetic philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and that of Martin Heidegger develop an understanding of music as a medium with inherently different traits than visual art or literature, which will then characterize the nature of collaboration between musicians and other artists.

#### *Nietzsche, Wagner and Music in The Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche’s first book considers modern aesthetics in relation to the Greek tragedy, with a heavy focus on music—the full title, in fact, is *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. Nietzsche’s relationship with music largely comes from one artist: Richard Wagner, the German opera composer. Therefore, to understand his views on music, one must first understand his relationship with Wagner.

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40. Breton, “Silence Is Golden,” 152.

41. Breton, 152.

Nietzsche and Wagner come together out of a shared interest in the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who believed that “the Will” influences human behavior to seek pleasure and become frustrated when they do not succeed. Happiness, he thought, is unattainable in a sustainable form because of this. Art, though, allows for an escape from the internal conflict of Will and frustration by removing humans from that world—specifically music, which does not try to represent it. Yet because of this, music does not only take humans out of the world of the Will, but it also brings them the closest to experiencing “ultimate reality.”<sup>42</sup> Wagner found Schopenhauer compelling for his metaphysical views along with his consideration of music; Nietzsche, although a philologist, had an interest in philosophy as well. Through his friendship with Wagner, Nietzsche’s passion for music grew, and he eventually began composing music, albeit subpar, to show to Wagner.<sup>43</sup> He began writing *The Birth of Tragedy* days after a Christmas gathering to celebrate the birthday of Wagner’s wife, Cosima, where Nietzsche debuted a paper on aesthetics in the Greek tragedy.<sup>44</sup> Not only is music intertwined in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but the music of Wagner specifically is.

Later, in 1886, claiming to have moved on from Wagner, Nietzsche wanted to resolve his previous confidence in a second edition of the work. The initial publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* was “constructed entirely from precocious, wet-behind-the-ears, personal experiences . . . standing defiantly on its own two feet even where it appears to bow before an authority and its own veneration, in short a first book in every bad sense of the word despite its old man’s problem, burdened with all the errors of youth,” he wrote in a new introduction titled “An

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42. Raymond Guess, introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, by Friedrich Nietzsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vii.

43. Guess, ix.

44. Guess, vii.

Attempt at Self-Criticism.”<sup>45</sup> Writing the book in 1871, Nietzsche made sweeping claims about the superiority of music as a form and its power as Dionysiac art, and this was his attempt to temper his previous beliefs. As editor Raymond Guess notes in his introduction to the text, though, it can be valuable to take Nietzsche at his initial words, rather than reading them as overly passionate and therefore erroneous. Nietzsche’s implicit rejection of Wagner in the second edition “must be treated with the same suspicion Nietzsche uses in analyzing the self-interpretations of others,” Guess writes, since the philosopher himself often hid his views and valued seeing an issue from multiple sides.<sup>46</sup> Taking Nietzsche’s “Attempt at Self-Criticism” as an example of such behavior offers a lens through which to view his writings on music in *The Birth of Tragedy*—while he does generalize and exaggerate, the views at the heart of Nietzsche’s argument still stand.

*The Birth of Tragedy* establishes an aesthetic dichotomy between the Apolline, deriving from the Greek god of pristine image, and the Dionysiac, deriving from the Greek god of impassioned performance. These traits manifest in art as well as throughout life, “in open conflict”—between Apolline structure and Dionysiac hedonism.<sup>47</sup> In art, Nietzsche first translates this to medium, differentiating between “the Apolline art of the image-maker or sculptor . . . and the *imageless* art of music, which is that of Dionysos.”<sup>48</sup> This, of course, calls back to the influence of Schopenhauer by characterizing music as nonvisual. Yet more important is when Nietzsche elaborates later in the text when discussing lyric poetry: “Even when a

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45. Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Birth of Tragedy,” in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

46. Guess, introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy*, ix.

47. Nietzsche, “The Birth of Tragedy,” 14.

48. Nietzsche, 14. Emphasis added.

musician speaks in images about a composition,” he writes, “as when he describes a symphony as ‘pastoral’ . . . these too are merely symbolic representations born out of the music (as opposed to the objects imitated by the music).”<sup>49</sup> This, of course, is because music tends not to imitate objects, as music is an ephemeral experience that cannot represent a thing. In fact, Nietzsche goes on to conclude in the chapter, music “has no *need* at all of the images,” since music is a sovereign art form.<sup>50</sup> Although this was surely one of the overconfident points Nietzsche reflected on in his second edition of the book, the heart of his argument is compelling—that music is not a lesser form for not dealing in representation.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche maintains in *The Birth of Tragedy* that society must return to creating truly tragic art, and the only way to do so is through a perfect blend of the Apolline image and Dionysiac performance, accomplished by ancient Greek tragedies and perhaps some of Wagner’s operas. This sets up the importance of the collaborations and relationships between visual artists and musicians, particularly when their works are meant to be experienced in tandem, such as Feldman’s *Rothko Chapel*, to be performed in the eponymous space housing fourteen of Rothko’s color-field paintings. It may be impossible and reductive to categorize some of the abstract and experimental works from these relationships as Apolline visual art and Dionysiac music—there is, for instance, some arguably Apolline structure in Cage’s chance compositions made with the *I Ching*, or Chinese book of changes. Further, the exchanges between artists and musicians meant music could pick up such Apolline qualities, as visual art could Dionysiac ones. Perhaps even some of these works of music or art achieved the true

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49. Nietzsche, 35.

50. Nietzsche, 36.

synthesis of both drives, creating pure tragic art. Regardless, applying the framework of the Dionysiac drive to music allows for a deeper understanding of its nonrepresentational quality.

*The Heideggerian “Sensation” as a Not-Thing*

This conception of music can be interpreted as in conflict with what Heidegger argues in “The Origin of the Work of Art.”<sup>51</sup> In the essay, his first and only major writing about art, the philosopher takes an ontological approach to the work of art. He defines the work of art as a “thing,” giving three qualifications to the definition: “the thing as a bearer of traits, as the unity of a manifold of sensations, as formed matter.”<sup>52</sup> Heidegger does later conclude that these thing-concepts may be inadequate—“the thingness of the thing is particularly difficult to express and only seldom expressible”—but still, music does not fit any of the three. As an example of a bearer of traits, Heidegger proposes a block of granite, which is “hard, heavy, extended, bulky, shapeless, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny.”<sup>53</sup> All of these traits presuppose the block of granite as a physical being. Music, though, does not exist in one physical state but in performance, and Heidegger gives no possibility for such non-physical traits. Further, Heidegger notes that this thing-concept does not even separate things from non-thingly beings, so if it were possible to assign a piece of music non-physical traits—melodic, dissonant, or loud, for instance—it would not mean music is a thing.<sup>54</sup> In Heidegger’s second thing-concept, he argues

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51. When writing about Heidegger, his politics cannot be avoided: The philosopher maintained membership with the Nazi Party during his life and died in 1976 without explicitly renouncing these views. Scholars have raised valid concerns about these views affecting his philosophical thought on life, death, and personhood; this analysis avoids such topics and solely focuses on Heidegger’s writing on art.

52. Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 156.

53. Heidegger, 148.

54. Heidegger, 150.

that a thing exists as a collection of sensations.<sup>55</sup> A symphony, therefore, could be a collection of sonic sensations. Heidegger clarifies in his examples, however, that he refers to sensation as a secondary effect of a thing's physical existence, in the way "we hear the three-motored plane."<sup>56</sup> Therefore, while this concept specifically can define, for instance, the violin as a thing (which it indeed is), it does not allow for music itself to be considered a thing. Heidegger's third thing-concept, of the thing as formed matter, allows the thing "to remain in its self-containment," he writes.<sup>57</sup> Music outright does not fit this concept, though, building on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, because music does not take a physical form.

In "The Origin of the Work of Art," it is clear that when Heidegger refers to art, he tends to mean the visual arts, specifically painting. For one, he draws on Vincent van Gogh's painting of "a pair of peasant shoes" for an extended example, building his understanding of the work of art heavily around only a certain type of art—an art which manifests tangibly in van Gogh's painting and refers back to another physical thing that exists in the world, his shoes.<sup>58</sup> Yet elsewhere, Heidegger shows he does not understand music, such as when he initially introduces the work of art as a thing. Just as a painting can hang on a wall or travel—that is, it can exist in space—"Beethoven's quartets lie in the storerooms of the publishing house like potatoes in a cellar."<sup>59</sup> Here, Heidegger makes the error of assuming that the notes on paper are the music itself. When a viewer looks at the van Gogh painting hanging on the wall, that viewer has an aesthetic experience, but it is difficult to have the same aesthetic experience by looking at Beethoven's sheet music without hearing the piece performed. "We, however, have to take

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55. Heidegger, 151.

56. Heidegger, 152.

57. Heidegger, 152.

58. Heidegger, 158.

59. Heidegger, 145.

works as they are encountered by those who experience and enjoy them,” Heidegger writes just a few lines later.<sup>60</sup> How, then, can sheet music be understood as a work of art in the same sense as a painting? In short, it cannot, because music as an art occurs in performance, rather than in being as a thing.

This is not to say, though, that Heidegger cannot be of use in understanding music. Returning to his explanation of his second thing-concept, the thing as the unity of sensations, Heidegger writes heavily on the sensation of sound. After explaining that in these cases, the thing’s existence presupposes the sounds (such as with the three-motored plane, heard only because it is known as a thing itself), he goes on to write, “We hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds. In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ears from them, i.e., listen abstractly.”<sup>61</sup> Music, then, as a not-thing, compels the listeners to listen away from things. So often, though, music becomes paired with things: in opera, for example, where this type of listening becomes lost because the music narrates a plot that occurs between things and figures. When taken strictly as a sensation, though, music begs to be listened to abstractly. This is what experimental composers like Schoenberg, Cage, and Feldman worked toward in their music, by valuing sounds on their own. “As contemporary music / goes on changing in the way I am changing it / what will be done is to more & more completely liberate sounds,” Cage wrote in the piece *45’ For a Speaker*, laying out this musical goal of working with sound as a sensation.<sup>62</sup>

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60. Heidegger, 145.

61. Heidegger, 153.

62. John Cage, “45’ For a Speaker,” in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 161, PDF, [http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage\\_Silence.pdf](http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage_Silence.pdf).

The abstract painters these musicians worked with had similar goals—inherent in the name of abstract painting is a call to view abstractly, similar to the abstract listening Heidegger referred to. For they, too, worked with sensations instead of things. As opposed to representing things like the pair of boots Heidegger used for his example, these painters wanted to work with the basic sensation conveyed by sight, color. “Color is a means of exerting a direct influence on the human soul,” Kandinsky writes, establishing it as the premiere influence and concern in his work.<sup>63</sup> Unlike experimental musicians, abstract painters like Kandinsky still create things: their paintings. However, they no longer aspire to represent things as van Gogh did with the shoes. Valuing instead color, a sensation, establishes enough common ground between abstract painters like Kandinsky, Rauschenberg and Rothko to establish their relationships with musicians—all of whom had a specific fascination with sound as sensation.

### **Kandinsky, Schoenberg and the *Blue Rider* Group**

Scholars often note that Kandinsky named many of his paintings like pieces of music, calling the more impromptu works improvisations and the more substantial ones compositions. He made dozens of improvisations, but only ten compositions, reserving the latter term for true stylistic proclamations.<sup>64</sup> “Technically, every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos—by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres,” he wrote in a 1913 essay.

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63. Wassily Kandinsky, “From *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*,” in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 89.

64. Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), exhibition catalogue, 11, PDF, [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_448\\_300063127.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_448_300063127.pdf).

“The creation of the work of art is the creation of the world.”<sup>65</sup> The artist, often in contention as the first prominent abstract painter, understood painting through music, writing about synesthesia as an artistic influence in a way that was ahead of his time. Fittingly, he exemplifies the first major case of an avant-garde artist developing a relationship focused on collaboration and influence with a musician: Schoenberg, who he worked with in the *Blue Rider* group.

Kandinsky met Schoenberg in 1911, after he had published his seminal work *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, which laid out his synesthetic perspective.<sup>66</sup> The musical references in his writing make clear that Kandinsky had an interest in music long before meeting Schoenberg—in fact, he practiced the piano and cello.<sup>67</sup> His meeting and subsequent work with Schoenberg, though, represented a turning point in the careers of both artists.

#### *Kandinsky's Spiritual Synesthesia*

First and foremost, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* establishes Kandinsky's fascination with color itself. It functions, in some parts, as a work of color theory, such as when Kandinsky lays out the physical and psychological effect of seeing colors. On one hand, he writes, color has an effect similar to the “sensation” of placing one's hand on ice—it can stop once one turns away, but it “can also develop into a [deeper] form of experience.”<sup>68</sup> The physical effect of color can also turn deeper upon experiencing a color for the first time, as a child does. As colors

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65. Wassily Kandinsky, “Reminiscences,” in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 373, quoted in Dabrowski, 11.

66. Jelena Hahl-Koch, “Kandinsky, Schönberg and their Parallel Experiments,” in *Schönberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter*, ed. Konrad Boehmer (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 67, Google Books, [https://books.google.fr/books/about/Sch%C3%B6nberg\\_and\\_Kandinsky.html?id=tz9vmAEFTFoC](https://books.google.fr/books/about/Sch%C3%B6nberg_and_Kandinsky.html?id=tz9vmAEFTFoC)

67. Hahl-Koch, 68.

68. Kandinsky, “From *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*,” 87.

become familiar and “the world loses its magic,” one will begin to associate “an inner value, eventually an inner sound” with certain colors.<sup>69</sup> As Kandinsky notes, all that stems from the physical effects of color is superficial. Color’s psychological effects, though, call “forth a vibration from the soul. Its primary, elementary physical power becomes simply the path by which color reaches the soul . . . since in general the soul is closely connected to the body.”<sup>70</sup> His meditation on colors show that one of Kandinsky’s goals in his work, if not his main one, was to create the sort of effects with color of which he wrote.

Taking color as a sensation, which Kandinsky also noted in his writing, leads Kandinsky to contemplate the sensation of sound as well.<sup>71</sup> Along with his reference to a color’s “inner sound,” he goes on to compare color to sound in other ways. “Bright lemon yellow hurts the eyes after a short time, as a high note on the trumpet hurts the ear,” he writes when discussing color’s physical effects.<sup>72</sup> Later, he concludes this section on color with an oft-cited metaphor: “In general, therefore,” he writes, “color is a means of exerting a direct influence upon the soul. Color is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer. The soul is the piano, with its many strings.”<sup>73</sup> In a way, color and sound become interchangeable in his writing, each a tool to evoke a response from the soul. This comes from a musical experience he had before associating with Schoenberg—seeing a performance of Wagner’s opera *Lohengrin*. “Music can respond and appeal directly to the artist’s ‘internal element’ and express spiritual values, thus for Kandinsky it is a more advanced art,” writes Magdalena Dabrowski, a curator for The Museum of Modern

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69. Kandinsky, 88.

70. Kandinsky, 88.

71. Kandinsky’s example of the hand touching ice also of course uses another sensation, that of touch, to establish his observations about the sensation of color.

72. Kandinsky, “From *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*,” 88.

73. Kandinsky, 89.

Art, in the catalogue for its 1995 exhibition centered around Kandinsky's Compositions. She continues, "Wagner's *Lohengrin*, which had stirred Kandinsky to devote his life to art, had convinced him of the emotional powers of music."<sup>74</sup> Not only did Kandinsky draw inspiration from music, he wanted to aspire to the intensity of its spiritual power in his art, just substituting the sensation of color for sound.

Before Kandinsky established his artistic ideas in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and met Schoenberg, he had not fully realized the style of painting for which he would become known. Consider his January 1910 painting *Composition I*—destroyed by a British air raid during World War II, but reproduced by scholars in black and white (Figure 3).<sup>75</sup> His motif of the spiritual manifests more tangibly here than in his later works, with one reading of the painting proposing the Horsemen of the Apocalypse as its central figures. Although the reproduction only exists in black and white, studies for the painting feature green, yellow, and pink as principal colors, along with sections of white, violet, and blue—which some scholars argue nullifies the apocalyptic reading of the painting, due to the brightness of these colors.<sup>76</sup> Regardless of what the painting depicts, it functions as an example of Kandinsky using abstract techniques to paint figures. For him to move to full abstraction, he needed to put his writings into action, and meeting Schoenberg allowed that to happen.

#### *The Blue Rider Group: A Vehicle Toward Realization*

Kandinsky attended one of Schoenberg's concerts in Munich at the beginning of 1911, a year after completing *Composition I*. He was understood to be a shy person, yet after the concert,

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74. Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, 19.

75. Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition I*, in Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, plate 3.

76. Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, 24-25.

he worked to find Schoenberg's address to begin a correspondence with the musician. He had befriended musicians before, namely the Russian composer Thomas von Hartmann. Jelena Hahl-Koch, a scholar of Kandinsky, gives a combination of reasons for his initiative in reaching out to Schoenberg: Foremost, Kandinsky had a noted interest in music by that time, but he also saw similarities between Schoenberg's avant-garde ideas about music and his own about painting.<sup>77</sup> To him, Schoenberg was different than the other musicians he had encountered before.

Later that year, Schoenberg would publish his *Theory of Harmony*, the musical equivalent to Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Music*. While Kandinsky's book called on the painter to move to pure abstraction in his work, Schoenberg's inspired the composer to follow the ideas of atonality and free chromaticism he established from his own experiments.<sup>78</sup> Once Kandinsky began to correspond with Schoenberg, the two realized their concepts in tandem—with Kandinsky, of course, turning to the nonrepresentational form of music for inspiration in his quest to abstraction, but Schoenberg also drawing from painting as he attempted atonal composition. When Schoenberg struggled to compose his experimental opera *Die glückliche Hand*, he looked to Kandinsky's experimental theater piece *Der gelbe Klang*, which he believed to be rid of associations with reality. In these pursuits, both Kandinsky and Schoenberg aimed to reach a "synthesis of the arts," contrasting their work with other non-abstract theater works such as Wagner's operas, which Kandinsky thought failed to reach such a synthesis because the performance was secondary to the music.<sup>79</sup> Schoenberg painted as well to

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77. Hahl-Koch, "Parallel Experiments," 68.

78. Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, 20.

79. Hahl-Koch, "Parallel Experiments," 74-75.

aid his composition and work on synthesizing art, just as Kandinsky played music—and some of Schoenberg's paintings express the abstract themes that his music paralleled for Kandinsky.<sup>80</sup>

It was Kandinsky who encouraged Schoenberg's painting, by placing some of the composer's works alongside his own in their collaborative publication, *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach*, or *The Blue Rider Almanac*. Edited by Kandinsky and the German expressionist painter Franz Marc, and published in 1912, it documents one of the earliest examples of a deep collaboration between visual artists and musicians in the avant-garde. It featured paintings by Kandinsky, Marc, and friends such as Paul Klee, scores by Schoenberg, and essays by Kandinsky, Schoenberg, Kandinsky's other composer friend Hartmann, and others. The group also staged two exhibitions together before publishing the almanac.<sup>81</sup> These exhibitions and the corresponding almanac provide important context to Kandinsky and Schoenberg's relationship: Not only did they exchange ideas and draw inspiration from each other's works, but they saw each other as artistic colleagues. Such a relationship compares to those decades before between Impressionist painters—illustrating cracks in the boundary between music and art.

Kandinsky corresponded with Schoenberg through 1914, and during his association with the composer, his painting noticeably moved further toward abstraction. The first major example of such is his impressive *Composition IV* (Figure 5),<sup>82</sup> painted in February 1911, about a month after attending Schoenberg's concert.<sup>83</sup> Even this painting, though, remained (abstractly)

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80. Hahl-Koch, 80.

81. Helmut Friedel, preface to *The Blue Rider in the Lenbachhaus, Munich*, by Helmut Friedel and Annegret Hoberg (Munich: Prestel, 1991), exhibition catalogue, 7.

82. Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition IV*, in Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, plate 31.

83. Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, 31.

representational, including depictions of the two figures on the hill toward the right and the rainbow on the left.

It would not be until after years of communication with Schoenberg and working with the *Blue Rider* Group that Kandinsky would come the closest to pure abstraction through a watercolor study for *Composition VII* (widely known as “the first abstract watercolor”<sup>84</sup>) and later, *Composition VII* (Figure 6) itself.<sup>85</sup> Some scholars notice objects such as a boat and mountains in the latter, relating to Kandinsky’s interest in the afterlife and apocalypse. Unlike in *Composition IV*, though, Kandinsky’s figures in *Composition VII* stand secondary to the overall painting, a clash of colors and forms working together not to abstractly represent a particular scene or narrative, but to portray the abstract itself. The painting “retains the general connection between the representational and the abstract through pictorial means: form, color, movement, and balance—the inner sound of the picture,” Dabrowski writes.<sup>86</sup> It took a relationship and collaboration with a musician—and not just any, but Schoenberg, with his own interest in and respect for the visual arts—for Kandinsky to fully realize a painting’s “inner sound” on the canvas. Dabrowski continues, “*Composition VII* in its conceptual, sonographic, and stylistic complexity embodies Kandinsky’s artistic aspirations.”<sup>87</sup> Such aspirations, to evoke the spiritual through color, manifest in the yellows, reds, pinks, blues, and violets set to the canvas, one of the clearest visual representations of what Kandinsky saw as a “symphony” of colors. He would not paint his next composition until 1923, marking *Composition VII* as an important end to his era of work directly inspired by Schoenberg and the analogous sensations of sound and color.

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84. Dabrowski, 43.

85. Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VII*, in Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, plate 81.

86. Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, 45.

87. Dabrowski, 45.

### Abstractions and Experiments in the New York School

In the 1930s, European avant-garde artists began crossing the Atlantic to escape the rise of Nazism, with most settling in New York City. As they moved, the world they had developed in Paris and across Europe moved with them, leading New York to be christened the new center of the avant-garde universe. As already established artists like Fernand Léger and Max Ernst moved to the city, helping the new Museum of Modern Art develop a reputation and giving Solomon Guggenheim reason to open his namesake Museum of Non-Objective Art in 1937.<sup>88</sup> Around the same time, Schoenberg moved to the United States, after taking a 1933 holiday to France and realizing that, as a Jew, he could not return to Germany. He first settled in Boston, but quickly moved to Los Angeles in 1934, taking positions at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles.<sup>89</sup>

Cage's teacher at the time, the American composer and ethnomusicologist Henry Cowell, praised Schoenberg in his lessons with Cage, leading Cage to pursue lessons with Schoenberg. He first studied under Schoenberg's former student Adolph Weiss in New York, where he realized his lack of interest in harmony.<sup>90</sup> By the end of 1934, he traveled to California with Cowell, beginning to take Schoenberg's classes the following year.<sup>91</sup> Fascinated by Schoenberg's twelve-tone system, Cage initially overlooked Schoenberg's intimidation toward his students until it became too much to handle. After a composition class in which Schoenberg told his students he wanted "to make it impossible for you to write music," Cage pushed back

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88. Cottington, *Modern Art*, 31-32.

89. Michael Hicks, "John Cage's Studies with Schoenberg," *American Music* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1990), 127.

90. Hicks, 126.

91. Hicks, 127.

against Schoenberg's ideas.<sup>92</sup> He dropped his studies with the composer in late 1936 after an infamous UCLA harmony course, in which Schoenberg said Cage lacked "feeling" for harmony.<sup>93</sup> He left California in 1937 having learned little about twelve-tone composition.

Despite their eventually abrasive relationship, Schoenberg's valuation of sound left an impression on Cage. He moved to Seattle upon leaving Los Angeles, and in a lecture not long after, he claimed, "New [compositional] methods will be discovered, bearing a definite relation to Schoenberg's twelve-tone system . . . and any other methods which are free from the concept of a fundamental tone."<sup>94</sup> Schoenberg's notable compositions were behind him. As the avant-garde moved to the United States, Cage would become the American composer to not only champion, but further develop Schoenberg's ideas.

When Cage moved to New York in 1942, the city's art scene was further changing. Solomon Guggenheim's niece, Peggy, opened her gallery Art of This Century that year, the first notable exhibition space to show developing American artists alongside the European greats. She inspired other galleries and dealers to follow suit, supporting the founding of the first wholly American avant-garde art movement: Abstract Expressionism, built around a Kandinsky-influenced fascination with color.<sup>95</sup> Some of the first prominent Abstract Expressionist artists formed an association called the "New York School" in the 1950s, and Cage followed suit with a community of experimental musicians that also included Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff.<sup>96</sup> This larger group of New York School avant-garde artists would provide an outlet for

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92. Hicks, 129-130.

93. Hicks, 130.

94. John Cage, "Future of Music: Credo," in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 5.

95. Cottingham, 32.

96. Bryan R. Simms, "Indeterminacy," in *Music of the Twentieth Century: Style and Structure*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Schirmer Cengage Learning, 1996), 345.

the visual-musical exchange pioneered by Kandinsky and Schoenberg to play out on a larger, more developed scale.

*Seeing Cage's 4'33" in Rauschenberg's White Paintings*

Like his teacher Schoenberg, John Cage also painted. He took it up in the period of exploration during his late teens and early twenties, but the practice never held his attention compared to music.<sup>97</sup> He eventually moved away from painting after noticing that his mentors tended to prefer his music to his visual art.<sup>98</sup> As with Schoenberg, though, Cage's experience with painting affected his approach to art throughout his career, prefacing his deep relationships and varied collaborations with visual artists.

Cage had known Rauschenberg since the late 1940s, but did not develop his noted friendship with the artist until they both spent the summer of 1952 at Black Mountain College in North Carolina.<sup>99</sup> For the previous few years, Cage had been experimenting with composition for the "prepared" piano, created by placing objects on the strings and hammers of a piano to elicit more percussive sounds. He found the prepared piano lent itself particularly to dance pieces, such as the popular *Sonatas and Interludes*, which he created in conjunction with Cunningham, the choreographer who became his romantic partner.<sup>100</sup> When Cage visited Rauschenberg's gallery show, though, his interests were changing—he had received a copy of the *I Ching* from Wolff, his student and contemporary, bolstering his interest in Eastern philosophy and Zen

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97. Thomas S. Hines, "'Then Not Yet 'Cage'': The Los Angeles Years, 1912-1938," in *John Cage: Composed in America*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Charles Junkerman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 80.

98. Hines, 90.

99. Caroline A. Jones, "Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (summer 1993), 647.

100. John Cage, "How the Piano Came to Be Prepared," in *Empty Words: Writings '73-'78* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 7-8.

Buddhism.<sup>101</sup> Inspired by Zen Buddhism's call to abandon ego, he first used the *I Ching* to compose *Imaginary Landscape No. 4*, a piece for 12 radios, by making charts based upon coin flips that would determine all aspects of the score.<sup>102</sup> This method also worked toward his explicit goal to "liberate sounds." As Cage wrote of his chance compositions with the *I Ching*, "[the] sounds enter the time-space centered within themselves, unimpeded by service to any abstraction, their 360 degrees of circumference free for an infinite play of interpenetration."<sup>103</sup> Later that year, he composed his monumental *Music of Changes* (Figure 6), four books of piano music created entirely from chance operations with the *I Ching*. On his charts for sound, there were sixty-four possibilities: the odd-numbered hexagrams denoted thirty-two sounds on a twelve-tone scale, and the even-numbered squares denoted a silence.<sup>104</sup> Other charts decided traits like duration, dynamics and superpositioning (notes occurring on top of one another).<sup>105</sup> Cage acknowledges in the score, "[it] will be found in many places that the notation is irrational; in such instances the performer is to employ his own discretion."<sup>106</sup> Such is the effect of him allowing the sounds to exist independently as sensations, rather than molding them to his personal preferences as a typical composer would.

As interesting as the sounds in *Music of Changes* can be, the piece also demonstrates the development of a fascination that would come to define Cage's career: silence. To Cage, though, this never meant abandoning his attraction to the sensation of sound. Instead, he saw silence as a

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101. Christian Wolff, guest lecture, "Composer Topics: John Cage," Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 18 January 2018.

102. John Cage, "To Describe the Process of Composition Used in *Music of Changes* and *Imaginary Landscape No. 4*," in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 57, PDF, [http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage\\_Silence.pdf](http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage_Silence.pdf).

103. Cage, 59.

104. Cage, 58.

105. Cage, 58-59.

106. John Cage, *Music of Changes* (Glendale, NY: Edition Peters, 1951).

radically new way to experience it. “For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not,” he said a few years later in a speech. “Those that are not notated appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment.”<sup>107</sup> Anyone who has tried to sit in silence knows that eventually they will begin to notice subtle, ambient noises in their surroundings. To Cage, this meant silence was just another type of sound, a whole subset of the sensational realm of sound yet to be explored in music. Moreover, silence sets up its own sort of chance operation—as the composer, Cage had no idea what sounds could occur during the silent sections of his pieces.

At Black Mountain, Cage first encountered Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings* (Figure 7), which engaged with similar ideas and aspirations to his own, translated to painting and color. As the name suggested, Rauschenberg created five pieces from canvases covered in a pure white house paint, giving careful attention to brushstrokes for the canvases to look like they were not painted at all. He presented them in displays of one, three, four, five, and seven panels, with the color intended not to provide any stimulation on its own, but rather to take on lights and shadows from the paintings’ surroundings.<sup>108</sup> “I called them clocks,” Rauschenberg once said. “If one were sensitive enough that you could read it, that you would know how many people were in the room, what time it was, and what the weather was like outside.”<sup>109</sup> In color theory, white is the lack of color, yet Rauschenberg saw the possibility for his *White Paintings* to take on color through their lighting and environment. As was the case with Cage, this came from a strong

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107. John Cage, “Experimental Music,” in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 7, PDF, [http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage\\_Silence.pdf](http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage_Silence.pdf).

108. Jones, “Finishing School,” 647.

109. “Robert Rauschenberg. *White Painting*. 1951,” The Museum of Modern Art, accessed 11 December 2018, <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/40/639>.

interest in color itself, evidenced by other works such as the untitled “black paintings” that preceded their white counterparts.<sup>110</sup>

From when he first saw them, the *White Paintings* struck Cage, becoming a minor fixation for the composer. The following year, he wrote a gallery statement for a show of Rauschenberg’s that included the *White Paintings*.<sup>111</sup> Later, in 1961, he wrote an essay on Rauschenberg and the *White Paintings* that he published in Milan, characterizing the paintings as “airports for the lights, shadows, and particles.”<sup>112</sup> Yet before his writings on the paintings—in fact, close to immediately after he encountered them at Black Mountain—he composed his famous “silent piece,” *4’33”* (Figure 8). The premise is simple: the piece consists of three movements, each of which is a single rest.<sup>113</sup> The first performance took four minutes, thirty-three seconds in total, giving the piece its name.<sup>114</sup> It took the valuation of silence as sound that Cage had developed in *Music of Changes* to an extreme, by allowing the entire piece to consist of wholly indeterminate sounds that are not notated in the score, existing on their own.

The connection between Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings* and Cage’s *4’33”* was undeniable from the start. “To Whom It May Concern: The white paintings came first, my silent piece came later,” Cage wrote to preface his 1961 essay on Rauschenberg and the paintings, by which time his piece had eclipsed Rauschenberg’s in notoriety.<sup>115</sup> It would be wrong to argue that Cage stole from Rauschenberg; instead, as the art historian Caroline A. Jones has argued,

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110. Jones, “Finishing School,” 647.

111. “Rauschenberg. *White Painting*.”

112. John Cage, “On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work,” in *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 102, PDF, [http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage\\_Silence.pdf](http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Cage_Silence.pdf).

113. John Cage, *4’33”* (Glendale, NY: Edition Peters, 1952).

114. In the tradition of experimental composition, a piece is not truly complete until it is “realized,” or performed, hence the value given to this detail from the first performance of *4’33”*.

115. Cage, “On Robert Rauschenberg,” 98.

Cage's encounter with the paintings "encouraged him to proceed with his 'Silent Piece.'"<sup>116</sup> Rauschenberg, in other words, showed Cage that art could create such a radically indeterminate experience of sensation. Cage merely exchanged the vessel from the painter's blank, white canvases to his own "silent" composed performance. Rauschenberg more than anything appreciated Cage's affinity for the works, evidenced by his invitation for the composer to write the 1953 gallery statement.

Upon seeing Rauschenberg's work evoke similar ideas to his own, particularly regarding how art could create an experience with sensation, Cage not only became friends with the painter, but made him a frequent collaborator. The same year Cage composed *4'33"*, he worked with Rauschenberg and Cunningham to create his first "happening," *Theater Piece No. 1*.<sup>117</sup> The piece took their shared explorations in abstraction to a new level, conceptualizing a performance that featured music, paintings, dance, and a lecture taking place concurrently and in the same space. After Cage and Rauschenberg moved back to New York, Cage's circle of collaborators widened to include Rauschenberg's romantic partner, the Abstract Expressionist painter Jasper Johns, and they continued to work in tandem and exchange ideas throughout their careers.

#### *Feldman in the Rothko Chapel*

Artistic relationships across fields like the one between Cage and Rauschenberg existed throughout the New York School's web of artists in the city. Of such artists, Feldman created the work that epitomized visual-musical collaboration through sensation with his piece *Rothko Chapel*, for the venue housing paintings by the eponymous artist. Perhaps Cage's closest contemporary, Feldman became known for his grid and graphic notations, passionately rejecting

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116. Jones, "Finishing School," 650.

117. Jones, 650.

the previous technique of notation using measures and staves. His works tended to be specifically notated rather than indeterminate, so his bond with Cage came rather through the sparseness of his works, akin to the silences in Cage's.<sup>118</sup>

Feldman had been friends with many Abstract Expressionist painters, and often dedicated pieces of music to them, such as *For Franz Kline* and *De Kooning*. He maintained, however, that those titles were solely the dedications and did not imply him drawing any sort of inspiration from their work.<sup>119</sup> This changed, however, with *Rothko Chapel*. Rothko, a close friend of Feldman's, killed himself due to increasing physical, personal and professional stress a year before fourteen of his paintings were to be installed in a new Catholic chapel in Houston. The couple helming the project, John and Dominique de Menil, then commissioned a musical piece from Feldman for the chapel's opening, to honor Rothko and his work.<sup>120</sup> This came at an important shift in Feldman's career; the composer had just turned back to traditional notation to explore a new idea: the continuation of sound.<sup>121</sup> In Rothko's dark, near-monochromatic paintings that line the chapel, Feldman found the inspiration to investigate these sounds further. The two had a "powerful, mysterious aesthetic" in common, Feldman later said in an interview.<sup>122</sup>

Similar to the experimental musicians of the time, Rothko found creative freedom in restriction. His style is characterized by rectangular chromatic sections, often emphasizing the

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118. Simms, "Indeterminacy," 349.

119. Steven Johnson, "*Rothko Chapel* and Rothko's Chapel," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, vol. 4 (summer 1994), 7.

120. Johnson, 6-7.

121. Simms, 349.

122. Morton Feldman, "Morton Feldman: An Interview with Robert Ashley, August 1964," in *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*, ed. Elliot Schwartz and Barney Childs (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), 364-365, quoted in Johnson, "*Rothko Chapel*," 7.

complements and contrasts of different tones.<sup>123</sup> “In sympathetic viewers, the pictures evoke primal—but ultimately enigmatic—emotions,” the music historian Steven Johnson observes.<sup>124</sup> They did so for Feldman, a noted admirer of Abstract Expressionists from Jackson Pollock to Barnett Newman.<sup>125</sup> “Freedom is best understood by someone like Rothko,” he once wrote, “who was free to do only one thing—to make a Rothko—and did so over and over again.”<sup>126</sup> Johnson argues that Feldman did the same through his own musical style, reading parallel similarities in the two artists’ work, such as Rothko’s wish for his paintings to be shown in low light and Feldman’s preference for quiet dynamics in the performance of his music.<sup>127</sup> These similarities exist so noticeably across their fields thanks to the artists’ constant focus on sensations of color and sound.

At Rothko’s request, the now-interfaith chapel (Figure 9) was built in an octagonal shape, with paintings hanging on all eight walls. Three of the walls, the north, east, and west, featured triptychs, while the rest featured a singular painting each. Visitors enter at the south of the chapel, confronting the three triptychs as they enter. When working on the paintings for the chapel, his final works, Rothko shifted his style as well—only one painting, which hangs on the south wall, featured a signature rectangular field. The others are either seemingly monochromatic paintings of dark purples and maroons, or massive black fields, corresponding with Rothko’s late interest in dark colors.<sup>128</sup> “The total rhythm of the paintings as Rothko arranged them created an unbroken continuity,” Feldman wrote in the program note for his piece, translating the paintings’

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123. Johnson, 9.

124. Johnson, 9.

125. Johnson, 7.

126. Morton Feldman, “Give My Regards to Eighth Street,” in *Morton Feldman Essays*, ed. Walter Zimmermann (Cologne: Beginner Press, 1985), 76-77, quoted in Johnson, 9.

127. Johnson, 9.

128. Johnson, 10-11.

visual qualities to sound.<sup>129</sup> This prompted Feldman to explore “a series of highly contrasting merging sections” in his music—a noted difference from Rothko’s work in the chapel, but conceived as such in an attempt to create a captivating, cohesive experience between the paintings and the music.<sup>130</sup> By aiming not only to translate Rothko’s manipulation of the sensation of color into sound, but also to use the sensational inspiration to create a complementary work, Feldman created an experience similar to that which Nietzsche valued in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Rothko’s paintings provide the strict, Apolline element, while Feldman’s music is the expansive, Dionysiac factor. When featured together, they create an entirely new way to experience the sensations of color and sound—the blending of sensations that artists like Kandinsky and Schoenberg, then later Cage and Rauschenberg, had worked toward in their collaborations. The spiritual themes that influenced Rothko later took on new weight for Feldman, tasked with commemorating his lost friend, and manifested in the immense sensational power of his piece. While the composer’s career continued for over a decade after *Rothko Chapel*, the piece remained the only work where he would claim to have drawn inspiration from visual art.

### **Conclusion: Avant-Garde “Teams” of Players Across Fields**

In retrospect, the visual-musical collaborations explored, in which sensation brought artists together across forms, undeniably left an impact on art and music history. Yet these relationships across fields also served to advance the participating artists in their respective fields. Historically, avant-garde art movements have struggled to find initial positive reception,

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129. “Morton Feldman: Rothko Chapel; Why Patterns?” New Albion Records, 1 October 1995, <http://www.newalbion.com/blog/-morton-feldman-rothko-chapel-why-patterns>.

130. “Feldman: Rothko Chapel.”

evidenced by the initial exclusions of Impressionist artists from the Paris salon in the late nineteenth century. It was this struggle, however, that influenced the Impressionists to work together in their quest to receive respect from the Parisian art world and public. The same can be seen through the groups created by artists who across visual art and music, who saw each other as colleagues through associations such as the *Blue Rider* group and the New York School, developing “teams” of players, in Bourdieu’s sense, to advance in the “games” of their respective fields.

Bourdieu noticed this difficulty to be received well as an avant-garde artist, regardless of field. “The avant-garde is at every moment separated by an artistic generation . . . from the consecrated avant-garde,” he observes, “which is itself separated by another generation from another avant-garde that was already consecrated at the moment it entered the field.”<sup>131</sup> Avant-garde, of course, refers literally to being at the vanguard, or front, of a movement. Bourdieu then interprets this within his framework of fields to lay out the difficulty of reception when working in the avant-garde. Except, as Bourdieu also argues, artistic movements exist to make this easier through strength in numbers. “They are produced in the *struggle for recognition* by the artists themselves or their accredited critics,” he explains, “and function as *emblems* which distinguish galleries, groups and artists and therefore the products they make or sell.”<sup>132</sup> Naming a style, however radical it may be, legitimizes it by allowing it to be classified within the cultural field, bringing cultural producers into association with others doing similar work.

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131. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods,” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 108.

132. Bourdieu, 106.

Few artistic styles, perhaps, have faced a more negative reception than abstract painting and experimental music—pieces like Cage’s *4’33”* and Rothko’s color field paintings continue to have their classification as art or music questioned, enduring many cries of “I could do that!” The existence of these difficulties in reception across fields contributed to the similarities these artists saw in each other’s work, leading them to consider each other colleagues in the same way as the Impressionists or Surrealists did. At the beginning of a new avant-garde movement, Bourdieu notes, producers may not experience much positive recognition “apart from other avant-garde producers.”<sup>133</sup> The shared focus on sensation among these artists created an analogy between color and sound, seen through the ways in which they collaborated, leading painters like Kandinsky to recognize the value in the work of their contemporaries in music, like Schoenberg, and vice versa. Further, by not only falling into movements in their fields like “experimental music” and “Abstract Expressionism,” but working across fields the *Blue Rider* group and the New York School, these artists leveraged their similarities in the larger cultural field. Such groups functioned as teams, allowing these artists to work to achieve capital together rather than as individual players. While this obviously happened through their direct collaborations, such as publishing the *Blue Rider Almanac*, it also occurs through their mere associations—as Bourdieu describes it, “every act, every gesture, every event, is, as a painter nicely put it, ‘a sort of nudge or wink between accomplices.’”<sup>134</sup> When those accomplices exist across fields like visual art and music, the potential for exchange becomes greater, only pushing these artists to produce more and better work. Their larger teams, however, encourage the long-term relevance of their collaborations, not only writing the artists into history, but also their collaborations

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133. Bourdieu, 107.

134. Bourdieu, 109.

themselves.<sup>135</sup> In the cases of Kandinsky and Schoenberg in the *Blue Rider* group, and the later artists and musicians of the New York School, it cemented the importance of sensation as a guiding force in artistic collaborations across forms and fields.

The online music magazine *Pitchfork*, which produces annual music festivals in Chicago and Paris, recently announced a new collaborative festival with the Art Institute of Chicago called Midwinter. Along with performances by rock, electronic and pop musicians in the museum's different auditoriums, the three-day event also features music performances and soundscape installations within the galleries, created by various electronic musicians.<sup>136</sup> "These original music productions are inspired by and responding to the iconic works at the Art Institute," *Pitchfork* said in its announcement.<sup>137</sup> More than a century after Kandinsky and Schoenberg's first meeting, visual-musical exchanges and collaborations are still coming together in their same tradition, brought together by a shared value of sensation in their respective forms.

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135. Bourdieu, 109.

136. "Pitchfork and the Art Institute of Chicago Announce Midwinter," *Pitchfork*, 14 November 2018, <https://pitchfork.com/news/pitchfork-and-the-art-institute-of-chicago-announce-midwinter/>

137. "Pitchfork and the Art Institute."

CONDUCTOR

Using a stop-watch, the conductor changes clock-time to effective time. Standing where he may be seen by all the players, he represents to them the movement of a second-hand, but counter-clockwise (beginning each minute with the left arm high and descending to the left. At effective 30" the right arm continues to the right and up to effective 60". When a change in speed is approaching he indicates this with his free hand, an upwards motion announcing a faster speed, a descending one announcing a slower one. Throughout the final minute he keeps the free arm at 0, the end being indicated by the touching of the two palms.

He may begin anywhere in the following table, provided clock and effective time are accompanied with an omission number (in this case provided for a twenty minute program), continuing sequentially.

CLOCK TIME	EFFECTIVE TIME	OMIT	CLOCK TIME	EFFECTIVE TIME	OMIT
1'30"	15"	30"	30"	45"	00"
1'30"	1'30"	15"	2'00"	1'15"	00"
1'15"	2'00"	00"	1'15"	1'15"	15"
1'15"	1'45"	00"	1'30"	30"	
30"	30"	15"	30"	30"	
1'30"	15"	15"	30"	15"	
15"	15"	00"	1'45"	45"	
30"	45"	1'30"	30"	45"	
15"	15"	45"	1'30"	30"	
45"	1'30"	30"	1'45"	45"	
1'15"	1'45"	00"	15"	30"	
1'15"	1'30"	00"	1'15"	1'45"	
1'30"	15"	00"	1'00"	1'00"	
1'45"	15"	00"	1'15"	45"	
1'45"	30"	30"	1'15"	1'00"	
2'00"	15"	00"	45"	1'30"	
1'00"	15"	00"	15"	15"	
1'30"	1'45"	15"	30"	45"	
30"	15"	00"	2'00"	15"	
1'00"	1'00"	00"	45"	30"	
15"	30"	15"	2'00"	45"	
1'15"	1'15"	1'15"	30"	30"	

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STRINGS

The following 16 pages for a stringplayer may be played with or without other parts for other players. It is therefore a solo or a part in an ensemble, symphony, or concerto for piano with orchestra. Though there are 16 pages, any amount of them may be played (including none). No part once played is to be repeated.

Each page has 5 systems. The time-length of each system is free. Given a total performance time-length, the player may make a program that will fill it. The action of the conductor (when there is one) will alter the length of minutes (time-units). Therefore, in the circumstance of having a conductor, the player's program should be made so that he will be able to play faster or slower than he would with a standard chronometer.

Notes are of three sizes: small, medium and large. A small note is either ppp, pp, p in the dynamic range or short in duration or both. A medium note is either mp, mf in the dynamic range or medium in duration or both. A large note is either f, ff, fff in the dynamic range or medium in duration or both. The possible interpretations are many; thus, a large note may be long in length but of any amplitude; or, it may be loud, but of any duration in time. Also, a small note may be short in length but of any amplitude, or it may be soft, but of any duration in time. Notes given appreciable duration may be played constantly or intermittently (spicc., trills, etc.).

All notes are separate from one another in time, preceded and followed by a silence (if only a short one).

Notes below a staff and attached to it by a stem are noises to be produced on the box of the violin (by percussion or friction) or on any auxiliary sound producing means (e.g. percussion, mechanical, electrical, wind means, etc.).

The sharps and flats preceding thick vertical lines refer to tuning of the four strings, a sharp meaning an increase of any amount of tension, a flat a decrease of any amount of tension, a natural a return to normal (approx.) tension.

A dotted line below a note or notes means *non sordino*. If several different mutes are available, number them and use them to vary the sounds.

*Crescendo* and *diminuendo* marks are alone or combined. When combined, the player may make any combination of two or more of them (*assessive*). The amount of cresc. or dim. is free in both intensity and duration. The absence of these signs means constant dynamic level.

Curves following notes are sliding tones. They do not refer to time-length but only to direction in pitch.

All tones are to be played *non vibrato* unless accompanied by wave like signs indicating speed of vibrato. Width of vibrato may be freely varied by the performer.

4 types of pizzicatti are distinguished: ., normal; plus-sign, stopped against fingerboard; x, stopped sideways against fingernail; arrows, slide following attack.

*Col Arco* cancels *col legno*. *Ordinarie* cancels *sul tasto* or *sul pont.* Artificial harmonics are notated with actual sound. o means natural harmonic.

The image shows a page of musical notation for strings. It consists of five systems of staves. The notation includes various performance instructions such as 'SUL A', 'SUL D', 'COL LEGNO', 'SUL TASTO', 'CRESCENDO', 'DIMINUENDO', 'PIZZ', 'ARCO', 'SORDINO', and 'NON VIBRATO'. The notation also includes notes, stems, and dynamic markings. The page is numbered '1' in the top right corner. At the bottom right, there is a copyright notice: 'COPYRIGHT © 1960 BY HENMAR PRESS INC. 375 PARK AVE. 20. NEW YORK 16, N.Y.'

Figure 1. Excerpts from *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*. John Cage. 1958. From "John Cage Unbound: A Living Archive," New York Public Library. Accessed 9 December 2018. <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/johncage/node/198>.



**Figure 2.** *Un Atelier aux Batignolles*. Henri Fantin-Latour. 1870. Oil on canvas, 204 by 273.5 c.m. From Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Accessed 9 December 2018. [https://www.musee-orsay.fr/fr/collections/oeuvres-commentees/recherche/commentaire\\_id/un-atelier-aux-batignolles-236.html](https://www.musee-orsay.fr/fr/collections/oeuvres-commentees/recherche/commentaire_id/un-atelier-aux-batignolles-236.html)



**Figure 3.** *Composition I* reproduction. Wassily Kandinsky. 1910. Oil on canvas, no longer extant. In Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), exhibition catalogue, plate 3, PDF. Accessed 9 December 2018. [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_448\\_300063127.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_448_300063127.pdf)



**Figure 4.** *Composition IV*. Wassily Kandinsky. 1911. Oil on canvas, 159.5 by 250.5 c.m. In Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, plate 31.



**Figure 5.** *Composition VII*. Wassily Kandinsky. 1913. Oil on canvas, 200 by 300 c.m. In Dabrowski, *Kandinsky: Compositions*, plate 81.

THE RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE, 3-5-6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -5-3 $\frac{1}{2}$ , IS EXPRESSED IN QUANTISED TIMES (INDICATED BY LARGE NUMBERS) (BEATS PER MINUTE). A NUMBER REPEATED AT THE SUCCEEDING STRUCTURAL POINT INDICATES A MAINTAINED TEMPO. ACCELERANDOS AND RITARDOS ARE TO BE APPLICATED WITH THE RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE, RATHER THAN WITH THE SOUNDS THAT BEAR IN IT.

THE NOTATION OF DURATION IS IN SPACE. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  OR 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ . A SOUND BEGINS AT THE POINT IN TIME CORRESPONDING TO THE POINT IN SPACE OF THE STROKE OF THE NOTE (NOT THE NOTE-HEAD) IN THE CASE OF A SINGLE WHOLE NOTE THIS STROKE-POINT IS MARKED BEFORE THE NOTE (AS  $\downarrow$ ), IN THE CASE OF ADJACENT-IN-PITCH WHOLE NOTES, BETWEEN THEM (AS  $\downarrow$ ), IN THE CASE OF A GLISSANDO, IN THE CENTER OF THE DURATION INDICATED. A STACCATO MARK, INDICATES A SHORT DURATION OF NO SPECIFIC LENGTH. A CROSS (+) ABOVE AN  $\downarrow$  OR AT THE END OF A PEDAL INDICATION INDICATES THE POINT OF STOPPING SOUND AND DOES NOT HAVE ANY DURATION VALUE. FRACTIONS ARE OF A  $\downarrow$  OR OF 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  CMS.

PEDALS ARE INDICATED:  $\text{---} \downarrow$  = SUSTAINING;  $\text{---} \downarrow$  = AFTER THE ATTACK, SUSTAINING INVERTED;  $\text{---} \downarrow$  = UNA CORDA;  $\text{---} \downarrow$  = SOSTENUTO.

## NOTE:

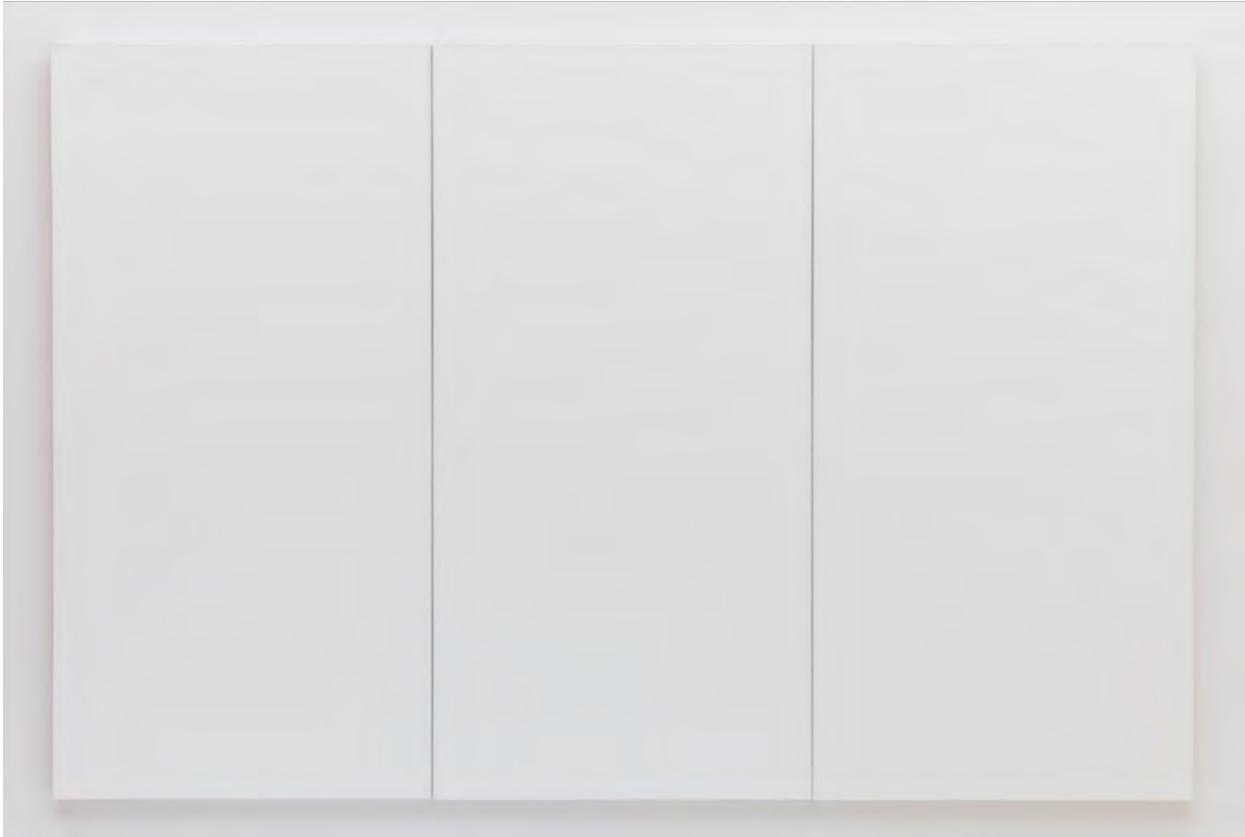
ACCIDENTALS APPLY ONLY TO THE TONES THEY DIRECTLY PRECEDE  $\downarrow$  (A DIMINISH) A KEY DEPRESSED BUT NOT SOUNDED. TONE-CLUSTERS ARE NOTATED AS IN THE WORK OF HENRY COWELL.

DYNAMICS ARE BETWEEN  $\text{mf}$  AND  $\text{ff}$ . ACCENTS ARE INDICATED BY A LAUNDER DYNAMIC FOLLOWED BY A SOFTER ONE, E.G.  $\text{ff} \rightarrow \text{mf}$  IS A  $\text{ff}$  SOUNDED ACCENTED LESS THAN  $\text{ff}$ .

IT WILL BE FOUND IN MANY PLACES THAT THE NOTATION IS IRRATIONAL; IN SUCH INSTANCES THE PERFORMER IS TO EMPLOY HIS OWN DISCRETION.

The image displays several excerpts from the musical score 'Music of Changes' by John Cage. The score is written for piano and harpsichord. The excerpts are numbered 104 and 108. The notation includes various rhythmic markings, dynamics, and performance instructions such as 'PUNTO AEREO', 'ACCEL.', 'UNA CORDA', and 'SOSTENUTO'. The piano part is written in the upper staff, and the harpsichord part is in the lower staff. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic shifts, characteristic of Cage's experimental style.

**Figure 6.** Excerpts from *Music of Changes*. John Cage. 1951. From Brooklyn College. Accessed 10 December 2018. <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/johncage/node/198>.



**Figure 7.** *White Painting* [three panel]. Robert Rauschenberg. 1951. Latex paint on canvas, 72 by 108 inches. From “Rauschenberg Research Project,” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Accessed 10 December 2018. <https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/98.308.A-C/essay/white-painting-three-panel/>.

I  
TACET  
II  
TACET  
III  
TACET

NOTE: The title of this work is the total length in minutes and seconds of its performance. At Woodstock, N.Y., August 29, 1952, the title was 4' 33" and the three parts were 33", 2' 40", and 1' 20". It was performed by David Tudor, pianist, who indicated the beginnings of parts by closing, the endings by opening, the keyboard lid. However, the work may be performed by any instrumentalist or combination of instrumentalists and last any lengths of time.

THE MOVEMENTS MAY

AFTER THE WOODSTOCK PERFORMANCE A COPY IN PROPORTIONAL NOTATION WAS MADE FOR IRWIN KREMER. IN IT THE TIMELENGTHS

FOR IRWIN KREMER

JOHN CAGE

OF THE MOVEMENTS WERE 30" 2'23" and 1'40". IF

30"  
2'23"  
1'40"

112  
112  
224

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Figure 8. 4'33". John Cage. 1952. From "John Cage Unbound: A Living Archive," New York Public Library. Accessed 10 December 2018. <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/johncage/taxonomy/term/41>.



**Figure 9.** Photograph of the north triptych of the Rothko Chapel. Thomas Struth. 2017. In Jacqui Shine, “The Rothko Chapel,” Letter of Recommendation, *The New York Times Magazine*, 27 August 2017, 26.

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