

J O H N C A G E
t h e h u m a n s o u n d s
o f t h e c i t y
emanuel dimas de melo pimenta
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John Cage - The Human Sounds of the City

Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta

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author: Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta

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www.asa-art.com

www.emanuelpimenta.net

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John Cage was born in 1912.
California.
Los Angeles.
The first time I met him was in 1985.
We participated in the Biennial of Sao Paulo.
John Cage performed a concert with his music.
I performed another one, with my music.
He was seventy-three years old.
I was twenty-eight.
We met each other for some minutes inside the building of the Biennial.
The space was empty.
We were alone.
We didn't speak each other.
There was nothing to say.
Silence.
A few days later I gave him a magnetic tape.
It was a single gesture to say good-bye.
And thank you.
I imagined never more I would receive any news from him.
But, some weeks later John called me.
He invited me to be a composer for Merce Cunningham.
To collaborate with him and David Tudor.
In New York City.
Quickly, a strong spiritual link begun between us.
John was a very simple person.
A lovely person.

He dressed like everyone.
Calm and peaceful outside.
He was an amazing cocker.
Genius.
Inventor.
Of sounds.
Unforgettable.
Working twenty-four hours per day.
No rest.
Sweet words.
Only enchantment.
Permanent enlightenment.
How to improve the world: you only will turn things worse.
And Thoreau.
Following the flux.
Nothing bad or good.
No intention.
Everything being process.
Universe while permanent changing.
Human as a dynamic part of change.
The right size for a human being.
Zero.
No time, no space.
Everything is possible when we take zero as starting point.
Freedom.
But individual in the most profound expression.

Dots of sand on an eternal golden braid.
A simple life in New York.
Sixth Avenue.
Eighteen Street.
A loft.
Large space full of light.
Home.
Losa, the black cat.
The kitchen.
At side, a small stone garden.
Each small stone was a fragment of his memory.
Pieces collected a little everywhere.
Like mushrooms.
The loft is fluid.
Plants, cactus.
All rooms connected.
Artworks everywhere.
On the walls.
On the floor.
Jasper Johns.
Raushenberg.
Anastasi.
Bradshaw.
Old friends.
Facing the windows, so many times snow, or the hot summer.
It is as if I could see John now...

...working at his round table.
Untiring.
No television.
No radio.
Neither a piano.
John had that wonderful windows opened to the Sixth Avenue.
The human sounds of the city were his raw material.
Books in the other side.
Merce Cunningham arrived later.
Two good and special friends.
Almost always surrounded by young people.
No space for sadness.
John laughed.
Always.
Delicate gesture.
He was one of the simplest persons I met in my life.
He knew that he was nothing.
Facing to the stars.
Facing to time.
Maya.
Kind and subtle.
Illusion.
Never worried to this or to that.
No judgment of values.
No order of values.
Only making things.

No permanency.
No posterity.
Life.
Walking.
John was one of my best friends.
Seven years of strong friendship.
Spiritual link.
Seven years of letters, laughs, ideas, calls, works, wines.
Silence.
The first music I dedicated to him was the
Concert for Frogs and Crickets.
It was recorded in the Brazilian rain forests.
1984.
The structure of the piece recalled Guillaume de Machault.
Later, it was Sun.
A musical piece made in 1986.
Sound waves coming from the Sun.
In 1987 I made Cage.
It was a piece made with sounds of Lisbon.
Thirteen hours transformed in thirteen minutes.
Metabolism and city.
Thirteen.
All sounds distributed inside a virtual geodesic cage.
Each point of the cage was a door for changing.
1991, Mesostic: using the sound of John's breath.
All these music dedicated to him.

**One day, in 1988, when I was at his home, I suggested to make a
photographic essay about his living space.**

John loved the idea.

Hours of work.

Traveling with eyes and soul.

To understand his spirit in that walls.

Doors.

Windows.

Light.

Kitchen.

Glasses and knives.

Bottles.

Cat.

Tables.

Stones.

Transparency.

Past.

John died in 1992.

Almost ten years ago.

Now, in 2001.