

The BACH AT ST CECILIA'S HALL series arranged by the Music Faculty of Edinburgh University
presents CAGE AT THE McEWAN, being the Scottish Première of

H * P S * C H * D

w i t h

LEON COATES, DAVID DORWARD, COLIN KINGSLEY,
KENNETH LEIGHTON, MICHAEL LESTER-CRIBB AND PETER WILLIAMS

If you are interested in computer art, or consorts of harpsichords, or multi-media environments, or the connections which can be made between Mozart and ancient China, or in hearing more (more?) music by the composer of that celebrated silent piece Four Minutes Thirty-three Seconds, you should be sure and be at the musical event scheduled to happen on the evening of Friday 21 May in the McEwan Hall, Leviot Row at around 7.30. A programme bought in advance from the Edinburgh Bookshop or the Concert Office, Music Faculty at Alison House will let you in.

The event is called H*PS*CH*D (which can be pronounced any way you like, though 'harpsichord' is as good as any) and is principally by John Cage and Lejaren Hiller, though when working on it at the University of Illinois in the late 'Sixties they enlisted a lot of help from the I Ching or "Book of Changes", the Illiac II computer on the Urbana campus (which could turn computer print-out into sound-tape) and a set of instructions attributed to Mozart for composing waltzes by means of dice-throwing.

Cage/Hiller's subtitle for H*PS*CH*D is "twenty-minute solos for one to seven amplified harpsichords, and tapes for one to fifty-one monaural machines, to be used in whole or in part in any combination with or without interruptions etc., to make an indeterminate concert of any agreed-upon length, having two to fifty-eight separate channels with loudspeakers around the audience". (The "etc." in the middle raises a lot of possibilities, one - to which Cage and Hiller have given their blessing - being an ambience of changing visual images to complement the sonic encirclement.) The result of this multifarious mix - historic/contemporary, eastern/western, random/programmed, well-tempered/microtonal, yin/yang - has been variously described. A distinguished modern-music dictionary (the Thames and Hudson) says that H*PS*CH*D's "complexity is perhaps unprecedented in the history of music", while the New York Times described the première at Urbana as "one of the great artistic environments of the decade", the realisation in an age of technology of Charles Ives's visionary project for a Universe Symphony. Not all estimates run as high as that, but most at least go along with Igor Stravinsky's impressed reaction to a typical Cage concert: "no wonder the man on your left keeps saying sehr interessant."

The McEwan manifestation of H*PS*CH*D will last for at least ninety minutes and involve upwards of twenty of the computer-generated sound-tapes, over a dozen image-projectors and six harpsichords with a player at each. There will be seats for those who want them but you will probably prefer to promenade. It's that sort of building and that sort of piece.

JOHN CAGE and LEJAREN HILLER

H*PS*CH*D at the McEWAN

Admission-programmes (80p : students 35p) obtainable
from the Edinburgh Bookshop, 57 George Street,
and the Concert Office, Faculty of Music, Alison House, 12 Nicolson Square,
BUY NOT 'at the door'

on FRIDAY 21 MAY 1976, from around 7.30 to around 9.15

With the financial support of the Scottish Arts Council.

COMPLIMENTARY

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HPSCHD at the M^CEWAN

This programme (costing 80p : 35p to students)
admits one person to the first performance
in Scotland of

H P S C H D

by JOHN CAGE & LEJAREN HILLER

presented by the Faculty of Music, Edinburgh University :
as part of the 1976 "Bach at St Cecilia's" series
with the financial assistance of the
Arts Council of Scotland

at the M^CEWAN HALL, Teviot Place
on Friday May 21 1976

from around 7.30 pm to around 9.15 pm

[There will be the opportunity to sit down but you will
probably prefer to move about during the performance]

HPSCHD at the M^CEWAN

The players are LEON COULTES, DAVID DORWARD, COLIN KINGSELEY, KENNETH LITCHTON, MICHAEL LESTER-CRIBB & PETER WILLIAMS. They are happy for you to move around the ground floor of the auditorium during the performance but ask you not to smoke.

The production team is MICHAEL PORTER, ROGER SAVAGE, GAVIN NEFFLETON & ANDREW SWALES, and they want to thank for their assistance GRANT O'BRIEN & JOHN BARNES (harpichords), ELISABETH ADAMSON (publicity), JAMES SHAW (poster design), JAMES THOMPSON (McEwan photography), ANN MUIR & VORNA WENBORN (slide-mounting), BETTI SLOAN (fabrics), BEN MCGLEAVE, BILL MCDOWELL, ALEC DOIG, SANDY STABLES & BARBARA PARK (audio-visuals), J. PAUL, ROSEMARY HOBSTMAN, ERIC JUCEY & JACK ISAACSON (projectors), TONY PINFOLD & BRUCE WATHRISON (staging), JOEL CHADABE, HUGH DAVIES & NEIL OLIVER (valuable advice) & DOUGLAS CAMPBELL (invaluable tolerance).

CAGE on HPSCHD: "You don't have to choose really, but, so to speak, experience it. As you go from one point of the hall to another, the experience changes; and here too each man determines what he hears. The situation relates to individuals differently, because attention is not focussed in one direction. Freedom of movement, you see, is basic to both this art and this society. It is a political art which is not about politics but political itself. As an anarchist I aim to get rid of politics. Only by looking out the back window, as McLuhan says, do we concern ourselves with power. If we look forward, we see co-operation and things being made possible, to make the world work so any kind of living can take place."

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HPSCHD at the McEWAN

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HPSCHD at the McEWAN

HPSCHD was composed between 1967 & 1969 by JOHN CAGE & LEJAREN HILLER at the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois. CAGE at the time was Composer in Residence at the School of Music and Associate of the Center for Advanced Study & HILLER was Director of the Experimental Music Studio. The piece was commissioned by the Swiss harpsichordist ANTOINETTE VISCHER & is dedicated to her.

CAGE was at the time about 55 & his compositions of the previous decade included WINTER MUSIC, FONTANA MIX, ARIA, CARTRIDGE MUSIC, THEATRE PIECE & ATLAS ECLIPTICALIS. HILLER was about 45 & had recently composed TWO ELECTRONIC THEATRE FANTASIES, MACHINE MUSIC & a COMPUTER CANTATA. Re the collaboration, a lot but not all the ideas behind HPSCHD were CAGE's, a lot but not all of the putting-into-practice HILLER's. (There was also assistance from JAMES CUOMO & LAETITIA SNOW.)

HILLER has been a pioneer of the application of computer science to musical thought. CAGE's work has been influenced by the teachings & example of CHARLES IVES, BUCKMINSTER FULLER, JAMES JOYCE, JASPER JOHNS, ANTON WEBERN, ANANDA COOMARASWAMY, ERIK SATIE, NORMAN O. BROWN, ARNOLD SCHOENBERG, MARSHALL McLUHAN, D. T. SUZUKI, MARCEL DUCHAMP & ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG.

CAGE/HILLER's HPSCHD is an indeterminate concert: a montage of between 1 & 7 twenty-minute keyboard solos plus between 1 & 51 twenty-minute monaural electronic tapes played through loudspeakers placed around the audience. Thus each performance comprises from 2 to 58 sound units, each unit fixed in itself but playable as many times as the performers wish in whatever combination with other units and complemented with whatever visual-projected elements are available & apt.

The piece is called HPSCHD because the keyboard instruments are harpsichords and the sound-tapes simulate the typical attack & decay of a note struck on a harpsichord. The 6-letter spelling is used because the computers on the Urbana campus could only take 6-letter words & the material played by the keyboards & tapes is largely computer-determined----or rather INdetermined, since the computer's role in HPSCHD is in the main to effect chance-operations, derived in this case from the I-CHING (the ancient Chinese oracular book of changes).

Names of some of the computer subroutines used in composing HPSCHD: ---
GAMUT DURAT ICTUS DEVIA CANTO CHOOSE SHUFFL ICHING ORMOLU

The strategies of the piece grow from CAGE's thinking about the music of MOZART's age & his projecting that thought forwards into our own age, taking in the development of keyboard-music (BEETHOVEN, SCHUMANN, SCHOENBERG etc.), the arrival of electronic technology (the tape-recorder, the computer) and the gradual escape from the dominance of common chord, systematizing ego & other occidental wilfulnesses.

MOZART's music au naturel supplies one of the keyboard solos in HPSCHD.

Thought about the texture of MOZART's music (how in it we hear several different sorts of line or gamut--the chromatic, the diatonic, the chordal--simultaneously) leads to the strategy for all the tapes and for a second keyboard solo: gamuts of 5-notes-within-an-octave, 6-notes-within-an-octave and so on up to the highly microtonal 56-notes-within-an-octave are subjected to randomised computer operations to produce



BACH

at

St Cecilia's

Hall

1976

WITH THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF THE
ARTS COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

HARSCHO

AN INDETERMINATE CONCERT

BY

JOHN CAGE

AND LEJAREN HILLER