



UNCAGE YOUR EARS

A rest-full lesson in inactive listening

for audiences of any size, anytime, anywhere
(maybe congregations, school classes, social groups, musical events)

Interested? You don't need much:

- Any musical instrument – from paper comb to Sousaphone; mouth organ to Wurlitzer.
- A performer not playing a piece that has no notes - only 1-bar rests...
- Someone (eg the performer) to brief the audience and set a length – eg 3 minutes.
- An audience of at least one, preferably with at least one functioning ear.

You know Lift Up Your Hearts? Well, welcome to Uncage Your Ears. It's a crash course in learning how to listen. Not actively listening to people talking, but in appreciating the music in any of the many sounds of any sort – slight or loud. It's meant for you to take away and put to use anywhere and anytime, maybe in a organised gathering of any size.

It's also a tribute to the sideways-thinking composer John Cage. Cage saw silence as a way to attune audiences to the soundtrack of everyday life, to value all those unintentional sounds around us as music. John Cage's works include 4'33". This is literally restful - the score consists solely of rests. It instructs the performer not to play the instrument during the entire duration of the piece—four minutes, thirty-three seconds. So it's meant to be perceived as music consisting of the sounds of the environment that the listeners hear while it is performed. When orchestras play this piece, the audience hears the sound of an orchestra sitting still, and themselves. (The quiet is like studying a pencil drawing compared with an oil painting.)



Cage's friend John Tudor first performed 4'33" in a concert in August 1952 at Woodstock in New York. Cage noted: *"You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began pattering the roof, and during the third people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out."* But he had a point. He said: *"There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds."*

4'33" is a piece of music that can't be controlled by the composer: it's different each time it's performed! And for each person taking part. Today we're going to hear it in a shorter version.

Ready? Uncage your ears!

Created by Hugh Gibbons Conductor of Just1
as a spin-off from one panel on



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