The Bootlegs are...

- A blank LP with unique cover art.
- A sampler CD from one of our Cage @ 100 concerts.
- A "dropcard" which provides access to download every bootleg recording we make.
- A limited release by Cantaloupe Music: out March 27, 2012.
“Music is continuous; only listening is intermittent”

–John Cage, after Henry David Thoreau

John Cage’s artistic legacy is formidable.

His innovations and accomplishments are truly staggering: Cage wrote some of the first electric/acoustic hybrid music, the first significant body of percussion music, the first music for turntables, invented the prepared piano, and had a huge impact in the fields of dance, visual art, theater, and critical theory.

Somehow Cage’s prolific output seems not to stifle, but rather to spur creativity in others. He certainly deserves surveys, tributes, and portraits during the centenary of his birth. But So Percussion wanted to do him honor by allowing his work and spirit to infuse our own.

In 2012, we decided to put Cage’s music together with new music created for the occasion. We believe that most of it should not strive towards the “definitive,” but be ever changing and always new. Whether or not that lofty goal is achieved, we’re going to throw up a couple of mics every time we play it and see what happens.
Performance Dates and Venues of Bootleg Recordings

2011

Friday, September 9 - 9pm
Musikfest Bremen
Bremen, Germany

Friday, September 16 - 7:30pm
Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, KS

Monday, October 24 - 7:30pm
Friends of Chamber Music
Portland, OR

Wednesday, October 26 - 8pm
Stanford Lively Arts
Palo Alto, CA

Saturday, October 29 - 8pm;
Sunday, October 30 - 2pm
The Mondavi Center
U.C. Davis

Tuesday, November 1 - 8pm
U.C. Santa Barbara Arts and Lectures
Santa Barbara, CA

2012

Thursday, Feb 9 - 8:00pm
Pickman Hall - Longy School of Music
Cambridge, MA

Tuesday, February 28 - 8:00pm
The Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

Friday, March 02
The Royal Conservatory, University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Tuesday, March 6 - 8:00pm
Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 8:00 pm
McCullough Theatre, University of Texas at Austin

Saturday, March 10 - 8:00pm
Lawrence University
Appleton, WI
Monday, March 26 – 7:30pm  
Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall  
New York, NY

**Sample Concert Program: First Cage @100 Performance**

Stanford Lively Arts  
Wednesday, October 26, 2011 – 8pm  
Palo Alto, CA

**Sō PERCUSSION w/ special guests**  
“We Are All Going in Different Directions”: A John Cage Celebration

ERIC BEACH  
JOSH QUILLEN  
ADAM SLIWINSKI  
JASON TREUTING

MARTIN SCHMIDT of Matmos, electronics  
CENK ERGÜN, electronics  
BETH MEYERS, viola

* * *

Credo in US (1942)  
Needles (w/ Martin Schmidt) (2010)  
Imaginary Landscape #1 (1939)  
Quartet for Percussion, from *She is Asleep* (1943)  
Use (w/ Cenk Ergün & Beth Meyers) (2009)  
“Bottles” from *Ghostbuster Cook: The Origin of the Riddler* (2011)

18’12”, a simultaneous performance of Cage works  
- Inlets (Improvisation II) (1977)  
- ’00” (4'33” No.2) (1962)  
- Duet for Cymbal (1960)  
- 45’ for a speaker (1954)

24 x 24 (w/ special guests) (2011)  
Third Construction (1941)

John CAGE  
Sō PERCUSSION/ MATMOS  
Cenk ERGÜN  
Dan DEACON  
John Cage  
Sō PERCUSSION  
John CAGE
Music by Sō and our Friends

Needles (2008) came out of Sō Percussion’s collaboration with Matmos. It was not a particularly remote experiment for Matmos, who have conjured music from almost every imaginable sound source. The idea of using amplified cactus comes from Cage’s Child of Tree. As so often happens, improvisation and play yielded a more structured piece. Needles appears on our 2010 collaborative album Treasure State.

Bottles from Ghostbuster Cook: The Origin of the Riddler (2011) is part of Dan Deacon’s piece for Sō which was premiered at the first Ecstatic Music Festival in New York City. Although Dan’s heavy beats and saturating noise don’t bear a lot of resemblance to most of Cage’s work, the amplified soda bottles that lend this piece its name are heavily influenced by his legacy. Dan is also a huge fan of the Fluxus movement of experimental music and art, who gleefully involved the Ecstatic Festival audience in a 25-minute long text piece.

Use by Cenk Ergün (2009)
use friction use gravity use pizzicato use pulse use pattern use tremolo use rolls use sustain use silence use intuition with caution

24x24 by Jason Treuting (2011) is an homage to Cage’s Third Construction, which is built in 24 sections of 24 measures each. We are inspired by Cage’s idea that a piece made of time durations allows room for all kinds of noise. In this case, drones are a central element of the piece.

An Imaginary City by Jason Treuting (2008) was originally written for So’s site-specific project Music for Trains in Southern Vermont. It was our first use of an antique child’s organ from the Estey
Factory in Brattleboro, which used to be one of the USA’s largest producers of parlor organs for family entertainment.

White Label Experiment by Nicole Lizee (2012) was commissioned by the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto for Sō Percussion’s Cage performance there. It utilizes toy piano, glockenspiel, drumset, and synth sounds.

Percussion: The Future of Music: Credo

By Paul Cox, Ph.D.

"Percussion music is revolution. Sound and rhythm have too long been submissive to the restrictions of 19th century music." John Cage’s words, written in a 1939 Dance Observer article, carry a special Mosaic resonance for percussionists stuck sitting in the back of the orchestra, where they stare at the word “tacet” or count hundreds of measures of rests before playing a cymbal crash at the climax of a Mahler symphony. Restless, unloved, bored and underemployed, percussionists were long ready for liberation in the 1930s, though they desperately needed a repertoire of their own beyond Edgard Varèse’s Ionisation (1931). Of course, Cage did not set out to liberate percussionists per se, but rather the sounds (and noises) they are responsible for playing.

In many ways, Cage was building on the goals of his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, by extending Schonberg’s notion of the emancipation dissonance to all sounds, even those considered “unmusical.”

Cage’s sound liberation movement fueled the expansion of the percussion repertoire between 1935 and 1942. After Cage’s studies with Schoenberg in Los Angeles, he moved up to Seattle where he began composing works and collecting instruments and new scores for his own “West Coast” percussion ensemble. In these recordings, Sō Percussion, a liberated group of drummers who fully comprehend the importance of Cage’s legacy on their own existence, present a cross-section of Cage’s percussion works composed between 1939 and 1985.

Cage’s three works using the title “Constructions” make up the core canon of his percussion output. These works delicately blend mathematically calculated structure with timbral nuance and instrumental variety. Using instruments found in junkyards, railway depots and the dance studio at the Cornish School in Seattle where Cage worked as a composer and dance accompanist, the “Constructions”
were originally performed by a group of talented amateurs that included Cage’s wife Xenia and Merce Cunningham---then a dance student at Cornish. To buy additional instruments, Cage solicited funds from family and friends; the author John Steinbeck donated $25.00 (a $400.00 gift in today’s dollars). Cage quickly amassed a multicultural mélange of over 150 instruments ranging from Chinese tom toms, gongs and tam tams to Native American rattles, Turkish cymbals, Japanese temple gongs, as well as claves and maracas from South America—not to mention the discarded brake drums, coffee cans, anvils and various pieces of sheet metal (a.k.a. “thundersheets”).

Cage’s First Construction (In Metal) first performed in Seattle opens with an explosive Joycean thunderclap of four “thundersheets” struck in unison. To organize the sextet, Cage used his “micro-macrocosmic” rhythmic structure, a form he invented to insure that the smallest parts (phrases) of a work were proportionally related to the largest (sections) by using a single governing number. Sixteen sub-divided into the series 4/3/2/3/4 determines the lengths of phrases, phrase structure, and the First Construction’s overall length (16 x 16 measures long = 256 bars; though Cage adds a nine-bar coda). Sixteen also governs the material and instrumentation: there are sixteen rhythmic motives and sixteen sounds available for each player in the “orchestra.” For example, player four’s sixteen sounds include a thundersheet, four brake drums, eight cowbells, and three Japanese temple gongs.

While Cage’s detailed mathematical design is notable, it is the way he uses texture and timbre to articulate the work’s structure that captures our attention. In the opening we hear a “string” piano (a piano in which the strings inside are muted with the hand) play four motives accompanied by four thundersheets for four measures. This is followed by a duet for oxen bells and string piano playing three motives for three measures. The next phrase features a dramatic change in texture with the glockenspiel, brake drums, and Turkish cymbals softly playing four successive half notes in unison over two bars. Cage’s motives are static and repeated in different combinations like carefully crafted building blocks of sonic material. As such, the work exemplifies its title as a construction—a work of architecture in sound—to riff on Schelling’s observation of architecture as “music in space.”

Audiences may notice a rather peculiar siren-like sound emanating from the piano. They may also notice a person inside the piano doing rather mysterious things to the string in order to achieve those sounds. This special “assistant” used in the First Construction often is tasked with rubbing a metal bar on the strings while the pianist trills on the keyboard with the sustain pedal depressed in order to produce the eerie siren sounds. The assistant is also responsible for creating a wide-range of sound effects by muting, strumming and rubbing the strings with fingers, mallets and other metallic objects. Cage learned these “string” piano techniques from his teacher Henry Cowell. A year later, he would greatly expanded on the piano’s sonic possibilities with the invention of the prepared
piano in 1940 with Bacchanale, a dance score composed for Sylvia Fort at Cornish. Cage found that placing various screws, screws + bolts, weather stripping, erasers and other material between the strings of the piano produced a seemingly infinite array of percussive sounds ranging from gong-like low tones to high-pitched rattles.

The percussion quartet Third Construction (1941) debuted on a concert produced jointly by Cage and Lou Harrison at the California Club in San Francisco. Some of the more unusual instruments used include the teponaxtle, a small two-toned log drum from Mexico and the quijades, the lower jawbone of a donkey or horse, which, when struck, makes a rattle-like sound as the dried teeth vibrate in bony sockets. Cage’s instrumentation is also more multicultural than any of his other percussion works, requiring Native American rattles from the Pacific Northwest, a Polynesian conch shell, Chinese toms, Turkish cymbals, a sistrum (an ancient rattle depicted in ancient Babylonian bas reliefs) and claves from South America, along with a lion’s roar (a friction instrument that sounds like its name), woodblocks, cowbells, tin cans, ratchet, and a cricket caller (sticks made of split bamboo). The work is highly virtuosic and frequently includes periods where multiple cross-rhythms are played simultaneously. Structurally more complex than the previous “constructions,” the Third is based on the number 24 (24 phrase groups x 24 measures each=576 measures). Also, rather than applying the phrase series (8-2-4-5-3-2) to each part, each player is assigned a different permutation of the series (e.g. player two is 5-3-2-8-2-4 while player three follows 3-2-8-2-4-5, etc.). As a result, while all the players still end the phrases together after twenty-four measures, in the midst of each phrase unit there is an increased density and variety of rhythmic activity. Finally, the Third has another quality that stands out. When the conch shell enters in the final section, the work takes on a distinctly ritual quality, perhaps recalling a dance on a remote Polynesian island. While Cage’s never associated his music deliberately with non-Western cultures, the tenor at the end of the Third may have been inspired by his time as Cowell’s teaching assistant for the ethnomusicology course titled “Primitive and Folk Origins of Music” at the New School in 1934.

Cage makes two points about his compositional process in his early writings: First, composing for dance influenced how he structured his music and provided a valuable source of commissions for his early percussion, prepared piano and electro-acoustic works. Second, he regarded percussion as a gateway to a larger sonic universe of electronic sounds. He declared his interest in such electronic sounds in his 1940 manifesto, “The Future of Music: Credo,” in which he called for the creation of musical laboratories to promote the discovery of new sounds. Cage found an ideal incubator for his interest in such sounds at the Cornish School in Seattle, where he had access to a small radio studio.

The radio studio served as de facto music laboratory where Cage
created and broadcast the *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*, considered one of the first electro-acoustic works composed in America. Cage’s score calls for muted piano, a large Chinese cymbal and two variable-speed turntables playing Victor frequency records, one of sliding tones and the other of single pitch tones.

*Imaginary Landscape No. 1* was composed for a dance by Bonnie Bird and debuted on Cornish’s "Hilarious Dance Concert" in March 1939. What is striking about the first performance is that the music was performed in the Cornish radio studio, then broadcast to the theatre next door, where it was used to accompany a rather curious dance on the theme of dismembered body parts. The nineteen-year-old Merce Cunningham was part of the troupe of dancers that moved among andhid behind large, mobile black shapes set against a black backdrop to, in part, create the illusion of floating body parts. Bird explained: “I discovered I could do things like create a body that covered the whole stage. . . . You would see a head, Merce’s head, way up, and then sliding down the side while two sets of legs walked down the stage. It was fascinating. And I would have the rectangle interrupt the two, and they’d skitter away. Or you’d see only hands moving in space.”

Cage’s electro-acoustic score served as an ideal backdrop for Bird’s experiment in movement. By broadcasting his mix of electronic and acoustic sounds, Cage created his own disembodied soundscape replete with unconventional piano sounds made by muting and stroking the strings inside the piano to create knocking sounds and ethereal glissandi effects. These were juxtaposed with recorded sliding tones and eerie cymbal drones—perfect for the macabre (yet humorous) theme of the dance.

Cunningham and Cage’s first professional collaboration came in 1942 with *Credo in Us*, a score composed for a dance made by both Cunningham and Jean Erdman (then members of the Martha Graham Dance Company). *Credo* was premiered on a program of works by young choreographers at the Bennington School of Dance in August 1942, and subsequently performed in New York City and Chicago. As a dance-drama, a genre popularized by Graham during the 1930s that combined narration with dance, *Credo* departed from Graham’s tidy narratives based on myths and patriotic themes. Inspired instead by James Joyce, Dada, surrealism, and popular radio dramas, their work explored the nuances and shadowy recesses of everyday life.

The drama’s setting is “Westward Ho!” and takes place over “three generations.” It is a satire on the sterile conventions of American middle-class life told through the perspective of a feuding married couple, the doubly named “Wife/Ghoul’s Rage” and “Husband/Shadow.” Erdman recalled that the names served as a point of departure for the dance and signified the characters’ public and psychological personas. This duality is also present in the title, which Cage described in an interview meaning both (“Credo”) I believe in the U.S. (United States) and I believe in us (you and me). For all three collaborators, *Credo* was meant as a serious critique of bourgeois
prudishness and, more broadly, the American myths of manifest destiny and dependence on European models of culture (e.g. Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, etc.).

Cunningham's scenario and script are full of puns and faux-French constructions. He claimed that the script was drawn from the Surrealist journal Minotaure, though Erdman later revealed that Cunningham himself was the author. The final line of the script, handwritten into Cage's manuscript score, captures the satiric tone, "But Credo in US was Ghoul's Rage Motto And la vie bids them well to use it."

Cage's score for piano (sometimes muted), tin cans, buzzer, muted gongs, radio and phonograph juxtaposes diverse musical genres, including a cowboy song, an "Indian" tom-tom rhythm, and a boogie-woogie for piano, as well as an ostinato figure drawn from sacrificial dance section of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. In addition, random radio sounds and samples of "classical" recordings, "Dvorak, Beethoven, Sibelius or Shostakovich," played on a phonograph add to the work's satiric tone.

Credo comes at the beginning of what Cage would later refer to as his "expressive" phase. Several works from the early-1940s are inflected with a mood of loneliness and angst caused in part by World War Two, as he described in his "Lecture on Nothing:" "Half-intellectually and half sentimentally, when the war came along, I decided to use only quiet sounds. There seemed to be no truth, no good, in anything big in society. But quiet sounds were like loneliness, or love or friendship." Compounding Cage's mood was the fact that his marriage to Xenia was coming to an end.

It is in this context that Cage composed the meditative first movement of She is Asleep for twelve-tom toms. A still and monochromatic work, the dynamics waver between p and ppp. Gradations in texture result from Cage's stipulation that the drums are to be struck on the very edge or center of the head with fingers, brushes or soft mallets.

In both Credo and She is Asleep we note a change in Cage's compositional process away from the mathematical procedures used in the three "Constructions" and Imaginary Landscape No. 1. Instead, the collage-textures of Credo with its inclusion of sounds drawn from everyday life (e.g. doorbell and radio) and the nuanced treatment of quiet sounds in She is Asleep signal a transition toward the development of an open process that allowed for a greater range of sonic possibilities and outcomes determined using chance procedures. While these open processes were not yet used in the composition of Credo, Cage does cede a level of compositional control by allowing the performer to select random radio and record samples, a process that effectively guarantees that the work can never be heard the same way twice in live performance. By the early-1950s, Cage had developed a chance-based system using the I Ching that allowed for randomness to enter the compositional process. Cage
had another motivation for adopting such chance procedures. After his study of Zen Buddhism with D.T. Suzuki, he embraced the goal of removing his own ego and personal expression from the work.

The remaining works on the program were created using such chance or indeterminate procedures—indeterminate meaning that Cage’s score is not intended to control the outcome of the performance. In fact, the performer is given ultimate authority for realizing Cage’s score. In the case of Cartridge Music, a work using contact mics (from phonograph cartridges) attached to various instruments or objects, the score looks like a work of abstract art. It is made up twenty transparencies each containing from one to twenty irregular shapes (each shape corresponding to a specific contract mic). In addition, Cage includes a transparency of solid points, transparency of circles, a transparency with a stopwatch, and a transparency of a snake-like dotted line with a circle at one end to be overlaid with each other to create a set of patterns to be deciphered as a score. What do these patterns mean? Solid points signify sound events and circles reflect changes in volume or change in material. The undulating line determines the sequence of events and the stopwatch the length of each event. Cage specifies that “undesirable” sounds like feedback and humming amplifiers are acceptable and that speakers may be set up around or within the audience. The Duet for Cymbal uses the same “score” as Cartridge Music. In this version, when the graphic score indicates a change of material, Cage stipulates that the amplified cymbal may be slowly submerged in water or placed on piano strings or on a soft mat to alter the sound.

0’0” (1962) consists of a single instruction: "In a situation provided with maximum amplification (no feedback), perform a disciplined action."

Child of Tree (Improvisation II) is a solo percussion piece. Cage’s indeterminate score consists of directions to aid the performer’s realization, including notes on how to select the ten instruments made from plant material (e.g. cacti, a pod rattle from a Mexican Poinciana tree, branches, leaves, bark, etc.) and determine the sequence and duration of the various sonic events. The performer then improvises the work using a stopwatch to remain within the designated time frame. Child of Tree was first used to accompany Merce Cunningham’s Solo (1975)—a dance infused with undulating animal-like movements. Though Cage and Cunningham professed to keep the creation of score and choreography separate until the dress rehearsal, the correspondences between the pointillistic cacti sounds and Cunningham’s slithering movements make for an uncanny and visceral link between dance and sound.

45’ for a speaker was made for a lecture at the Composers’ Concourse in London in October 1954. Cage created a collage text using his own writings along with various sound effects and music drawn from 34'46.776” for Two Pianists, which Cage and David Tudor were performing at the time. For the London lecture, Cage replaced his
part of the piano duet with the lecture. Unfortunately, his lecture turned out to be impossible to speak within the piano part’s specified duration of 39’. After further experimentation, Cage settled on 45’, or roughly two-minutes per line of text, as an acceptable amount of time for the work, however you may notice that certain portions of the text are read at near super-human speeds. Cage recounted in *Silence* that he planned to assemble the lecture while crossing the Atlantic on his way to Europe. Unfortunately his ocean liner was involved in a collision and had to turn back to New York. Cage and Tudor then flew on to Amsterdam. Over the course of the tour, Cage wrote the lecture on trains and in restaurants and hotels. Cage used detailed chance techniques to make the work. These techniques were used to answer specific questions related to content and mode of delivery. Questions included: “1. Is there speech or silence? 2. And for how long? 3. New material or old material?” For old material, Cage used chance techniques to make a selection of material from a preexisting lecture or article; for new material, chance was used to choose a specific topic drawn from a list of 32 subjects, ranging from “Listening as ignorance” to “Theatre (music work of life)” “Psychology” and “Activity of performance.” The text is laid out within a timeline format, with duration running along the left hand margin, and volume indicated by typography: italics = soft; **bold** = loud; roman = normal. Cage’s inclusion of other sound effects like coughing, drinking water and hissing add humorous tone, though often humor by happenstance:

“The best thing to do about counterpoint is what Schoenberg did. Teach it.” (Hold up hand, gargle).”

Cage required four players for *Inlets* (1977): one to play long tones on a conch shell and light various pinecones on fire; and three performers to manipulate amplified conch shells filled with water to create gurgling sounds. Cunningham used the score for two dances, *Inlets* (1977) and *Inlets 2* (1983). Dance and score, though created separately, drew on Cage and Cunningham’s mutual interest in the coastline of the Pacific Northwest. Morris Graves created the costume and set design for *Inlets*, which was premiered in Seattle in September 1977. *Inlets* represented a kind of homecoming for Cunningham and Cage. In the late-1930s, they had met at the Cornish School where Cunningham was studying drama and dance and Cage was accompanying dance classes and composing scores for his percussion ensemble. It was also in Seattle where Cage met the painter Morris Graves, who famously attended one of Cage’s percussion concerts and yelled “Jesus in the Everywhere!” Even though Graves was kicked out of Cage’s concert, they soon became friends and collaborators. It was Graves in fact who introduced Cage to an idyllic island nestled in Puget Sound from which expansive views of several inlets and waterways could be seen—no doubt an early inspiration for the *Inlets* project.

But what about the noise of crumpling paper which he used to do in order to paint the series of ‘Papiers froisses’ or tearing up paper to make ‘Papiers dechires?’ Arp was stimulated by water (sea, lake,
and flowing waters like rivers), forests (1985) is for 3-10 performers, each following their own pulse, which is not coordinated with the others. A series of symbols on a typewriter (+, -, 0) indicate when sound is to be made.

Credits:

Sō Percussion is Eric Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting

Other Performers featured: M.C. Schmidt, Drew Daniel, Dan Deacon, Beth Meyers, Cenk Ergün, students from the University of Texas percussion studio

Recorded by Sō Percussion in a lot of different places
Mastering by Lawson White

LP Artwork by Jason Treuting
LP Artwork assisted by Jeff Eng, Jacqueline Russo, and Beth Meyers

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Sō Percussion plays Vic Firth sticks, Pearl/Adams instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Black Swamp accessories, and Estey Organs.

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