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John Cage (1912–1992) was without doubt one of the most important and influential figures in twentieth-century music. Pupil of Schoenberg, Henry Cowell, Marcel Duchamp, and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, among others, he spent much of his career in pursuit of an unusual goal: 'giving up control so that sounds can be sounds', as he put it. This book celebrates the richness and diversity of Cage's achievements - the development of the prepared piano and of the percussion orchestra, the adoption of chance and of indeterminacy, the employment of electronic resources and of graphic notation, and the questioning of the most fundamental tenets of Western art music. Besides composing around 300 works, he was also a prolific performer, writer, poet, and visual artist. Written by a team of experts, this Companion discusses Cage's background, his work, and its performance and reception, providing in sum a fully rounded portrait of a fascinating figure.

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Editorial Review

Review

"These essays ... represent a significant contribution to understanding the uniqueness of Cage. Highly recommended." Choice

About the Author

David Nicholls is Professor of Music at the University of Southampton. Author of American Experimental Music, 1890-1940 (Cambridge, 1990) and editor of The Cambridge History of American Music (Cambridge, 1998) and numerous articles on topics in American music, he has also acted as contributing editor for the reissue of Henry Cowell's New Musical Resources (CUP, 1996) and The Whole World of Music: A Henry Cowell Symposium (1997). He is also editor of the journal American Music.

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