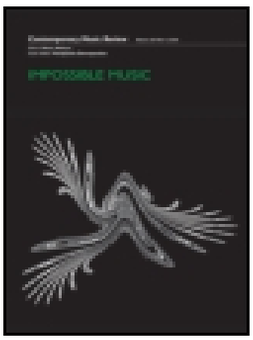

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Contemporary Music Review

ISSN: 0749-4467 (Print) 1477-2256 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gcmr20

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To cite this article: Carmen Pardo Salgado (2019): The Influence of John Cage on Spanish Experimental Music, Contemporary Music Review, DOI: 10.1080/07494467.2019.1578119

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2019.1578119

Contemporary Music Review, 2019
https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2019.1578119

The Influence of John Cage on Spanish Experimental Music

Carmen Pardo Salgado

The influence of John Cage's music and ideas on Spanish experimental music is far-reaching and extends from the 1950s to the present day. In order to analyse this influence, we have divided it into three important periods. In the first one, which began during the Franco dictatorship, we find Juan Hidalgo and the Zaj group that he co-founded with Ramón Barce and Walter Marchetti, in 1964. The second period, from the last breaths of Francoism to the political transition toward democracy, was marked by the arrival of the Merce Cunningham Company with Cage in 1966, and by the Pamplona Encounters in 1972. Carles Santos and Llorenç Barber are prominent during this period. In the third one, with democracy restored, Cage's influence has been more diffuse and involves musicians bridging the gap between Santos and Barber's generation, and younger composers born in the 1970s and 1980s.

Keywords: John Cage (1912–1992); Experimental Music; Juan Hidalgo (1927–2018); Zaj; Pamplona Encounters

Introduction

> He [Cage] brought out what you already knew and helped you become conscious of the essence of what you were doing. (Higgins, cited in Nyman 1999, 51)

This description by Dick Higgins of John Cage's teaching—at the New School of Social Research at the end of the 1950s—could well be the leitmotif of this text, while bearing in mind that, with Cage, 'school' or 'style' is something of a misnomer.

In order to consider Cage's influence on Spanish experimentalism—a topic that has unfortunately been examined in only a few essays (Carretón Cano 1992, 2009)—we need to highlight its fluid nature. This fluidity is accentuated firstly by the closeness of Cage to Dadaism, and secondly by the link between Dadaism and Zen Buddhism. As he explained, while still a student he was impressed by the lecture 'Zen Buddhism and Dada', that Nancy Wilson Ross gave at the Cornish School in Seattle in 1939

(Cage 1973a, xi). Cage's friendship with Ross[1] lasted his whole life, and this lecture marked a turning point for him. Nevertheless, Ross's manuscript for the lecture was actually entitled *The Symbols of Art* and dealt more with Jungianism than Buddhism (MacDonald 2012, 44). It does not mean however that Cage saw the former concept as secondary. Both aspects were important: through his initiation into the connections between Buddhism and Zen through Ross, and via the fact that the reference to Jung[2] was influenced by a reading of D. T. Suzuki's work on Jungian psychology (Cage 1993c, 41).

Another fundamental figure who noted the proximity between Zen Buddhism and Dadaism was Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. We know of the Dadaists' influence on Moholy-Nagy's works at Bauhaus (Otto 2009, 89–131) but, although the artist did not himself explain his relationship with Buddhism, his work can be compared with that of the Buddhist masters. According to Kaplan, this relationship appears in the pedagogical use of koans, diagrams, puzzles, riddles 'and a sense of humor to expose the paradoxes of the significance of the signature and its relation to a mysterious logic of emptiness' (1995, 164). In 1938, Cage met Moholy-Nagy at Mills College where the American artist was teaching, and it was probably then that he read Moholy-Nagy's book *The New Vision.* Three years later, he was invited by the Hungarian artist to give a course at the School of Design in Chicago. The course was entitled *Sound Experiments* but, as the composer later regretted, the class was only theoretical because he could not disturb the neighbouring classes with sounds (Cage 1993c, 38). Cage would later explain that Moholy-Nagy's work was important to his thinking. (Cage and Retallack 1996, 87).

Cage's further immersion in Zen Buddhism was brought about through classes given by D. T. Suzuki—beginning in 1951 at Columbia University—which he attended for two years. Also important was his relationship with Alan Watts, with whom Cage initially maintained certain differences (Cage 1973a, xi). Clearly alluding to Cage, Watts had accused musicians who used Zen of arbitrarily justifying gratuitousness and qualifying their practice as Zen beat. However, and according to Cage, after reading his work *Silence*, Watts changed his mind (Cage 1981, 107).

In the introduction to his book, *Silence*, Cage invites us to think about the links between his own work, Dadaism and Zen Buddhism. His words are well worth remembering:

> Critics frequently cry 'Dada' after attending one of my concerts or hearing one of my lectures. Others bemoan my interest in Zen. […] What I do, I do not wish blamed on Zen, though without my engagement with Zen […] I doubt whether I would have done what I have done. […] I mention this in order to free Zen of any responsibility for my actions. I shall continue making them, however. I often point out that Dada nowadays has in it a space, an emptiness, that it formerly lacked. What nowadays, America mid-twentieth century, is Zen? (Cage 1973a, xi)[3]

Hence, for Cage, it was the acceptance of emptiness that was new. This emptiness was not so much about paying attention to the relationships between sounds as about the emptiness necessary for those relationships to take place. Dada had lacked that

emptiness found by Cage in Zen. For Cage, in that emptiness, the Zen and Dada attitudes certainly move on a journey taking us from West to East, but it is one that is difficult to grasp. This is the same difficulty that Cage experienced in the presence of Marcel Duchamp. On more than one occasion, Cage asked him if he had studied Zen because his attitude seemed to suggest it. Duchamp denied having done so (Roth and Roth 1998, 75). Dadaism was embodied in the figure of Marcel Duchamp, and Cage linked it to Zen Buddhism (Cage 1993b, 242; Larson 2013). If Dadaism came to America with Duchamp, the nexus between Dadaism and Zen Buddhism would be brought back to Europe with Cage, a fact that is sometimes neglected in studies on Dada.[4]

In addition, his proposal of the non-distinction between art and life (Cage 1985, ix, 58–59) inherited from Dada, and his idea of experimentation conceived as 'an act the outcome of which is unknown' (Cage 1973a, 13), are two concepts that prevent us from referring to Cage in terms of style, school or the creation of an aesthetic limited to the so-called 'art world' (Danto 1964, 571–584).[5] As Juan Hidalgo wrote in a letter to Higgins in 1966, 'Cage helps people to find themselves' (Sarmiento 1998, 63), and for his 75th birthday greetings, he labelled Cage as 'a cage without bars' (Hidalgo 1991, n.p.). It is not a question of influence, in a traditional sense, but rather what Cage generated for music, and in the music of those who have felt close to him, in a direct or an indirect way.

If we focus on music, Cage's fundamental contribution was to open up its scope. As he suggested early in his career, at a conference at the Seattle Arts Society in 1937: 'If this word "music" is sacred and reserved for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: organization of sound' (Cage 1973a, 3). This opening up of the musical field was accompanied by a sense of creative freedom which became essential to understanding what emanates from Cage's writings, lectures, and music. With this freedom in mind, we can mention those aspects of Cage's work that, to a great extent, have left their 'flow' in Spanish experimental music from the end of the 1950s onward. These aspects are: the conferences and concerts at Darmstadt in 1958; his book *Silence*; graphic notation; his vocal work; and his visits to Spain. Such aspects cannot be analysed separately since they often have a combined effect and are specific to the different generations of musicians who will be the object of discussion here.

We will analyse how Cage has affected experimental music in Spain by taking into account, in particular, three generations of musicians: the first represented by Juan Hidalgo (b. Las Palmas, 1927- d. Ayacata, Gran Canaria, 2018) and the Zaj group; the second, by Carles Santos (b. Vinaròs, 1940-d. Vinaròs, 2017) and Llorenç Barber (b. Aielo de Malferit, 1948); and finally, the third generation that bridges the gap between Santos and Barber, and the musicians born in the 1970s and 1980s. With all of them—as stipulated in a roundtable discussion with Barber, Daniel Charles (1935–2008), Esther Ferrer (b. San Sebastián, 1937), and Hidalgo at the Casa Encendida in Madrid, in 2006—the notion of the 'ism' in '*the cageeee … … ism of Spainiana*' ['Españaña' in the original] (Pardo 2007, 56)[6] must be to disassociate

from the modes of a doctrine, a system, a school, or a movement. Cage and the 'ism' are separated by a dotted line, or ellipsis; that is, by a space of indeterminacy which can give us the freedom that the musician advocated.[7]

A Brief Historical Review of the Spanish Context (1916–1960)

In the early twentieth century, Dadaism was strong in Catalonia, due to the arrival of Arthur Cravan and Francis Picabia and the exhibitions held at the Dalmau Gallery. In addition, a number of journals in Catalonia, and in the rest of Spain, published texts on the European avant-garde and, particularly, articles by Tristan Tzara, the main promoter of Dada.[8] Next, the Spanish Civil War led to the arrival of European and American volunteers and intellectuals who came in support of the Republican government. Tzara, first visited Spain in 1929, and later, between 1934 and 1936, sent by the communist magazine *Regards*. He also collaborated with other French intellectuals in the dossier *Espagne 1936*, produced by the *Commune* magazine to support the government of the Republic, and in 1937 was elected secretary of the Committee for the Defence of Spanish Culture at the International Congress of Antifascist Intellectuals held in Madrid and Valencia.

Once the war was over, the avant-garde was reduced to a fleeting episode, and Spain was left with a loss of cultural dynamism that led the philosopher Sacristán (1951) to claim that since the critic Adolfo Salazar had left, there was no one in the country who knew music, save for Federico Sopeña who, rather than talk about it, entered into a dialogue with God. Musicians such as Rodolfo Halffter (1900–1987) and Roberto Gerhard (1896–1970) went into exile abroad, which, along with the so-called 'interior exile' of so many other musicians, led to a period of desertification as far as avant-garde movements and experimental music were concerned. Only music showing nationalistic pride and the values espoused by the regime acquired any visibility. In the midst of such difficulties, in 1947, the *Círculo Manuel de Falla* was founded in Barcelona with the support of the French Institute and remained active until 1956. Its aim was to disseminate new music—particularly Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók—through concerts, conferences, and the magazine *Counterpoint*. It was the first attempt to establish a nexus between the music of the avant-garde initiated in the 1920s and its resurgence in the 1950s.

In 1952, a branch of *Juventudes Musicales*, part of the *Jeunesses Musicales*, was set up in Madrid, and in 1958, the *Grupo Nueva Música* [New Music Group] was created there by a group of composers who belonged to the so-called *Generation of '51*. They were hosted in the *Aula de Música del Ateneo*, directed by Fernando Ruiz Coca, and sponsored by the critic Enrique Franco—a Falangist militant like Sopeña—who was also the Musical Director of *Radio Nacional de España* from 1952. These composers attempted to move away from the 'national culturalism' promoted by the regime (Coria 1973, 25). They did not adhere to a particular aesthetic, as each composer followed his own path; in fact, they stayed together for only one year. However, despite the lack of aesthetic coherence, they expressed their determination. In the

words of Ramón Barce (1928–2008), a key member of the *Grupo Nueva Música*, their aim was 'to accelerate the evolution of Spanish music towards a synchronization with that of Europe' (as cited in Custer 1962, 1). Although the group broke up in 1959, they were notable for concerts promoting the diffusion of Spanish, and European, contemporary music. In the programme of the first concert they set out a kind of manifesto (reprinted in *Sonda* magazine in 1973):

> […] We are Spanish and, although it is not our wish – and even if it was – in our works, one ought to infer quite clearly the root of our nationality or, better, that of our race. But we want to speak a language of universal validity and place ourselves within the sentimental and aesthetic framework of our historical time. This means that we are not 'nationalists', with quotation marks, nor, in general, anything that means affiliation to an artistic sub-credo that requires the suffix 'ism'. We feel as undeniably Spanish as we are passionately European.[9]

Two ambiguities stand out here: the first is that between the 'nation' or 'race' and Europeanism, and the second arises from the desire to be framed in the sentimental and aesthetic scheme of their historical time, while at the same time denying any affiliation to an 'ism'. Undoubtedly it would be difficult to attend to the avant-garde movements that continued to develop beyond Spain's borders and remain, at the same time, within the historical context of Franco's regime.

The Son of Cage and the Zaj Group

The Son of Cage

> John Cage is my father, even if my name is Hidalgo, and Duchamp my grandfather, even if his name is not Cage … But one forgets one's father … and as for my great-grandparents, they might have been Chinese, for all I know. (Hidalgo cited in Jiménez 1989, 147)[10]

Before the encounter with Hidalgo, Cage's first taste of Spain was during his 18-month trip to Europe, from the summer of 1930 to 1931. He visited Seville, where he 'noticed the multiplicity of simultaneous visual and audible events all going together in one's experience and producing enjoyment' (Cage 1993b, 238), an experience that informed his *musicircus*—a kind of non-focalisation of attention he developed after the end of the 1960s, whose name was borrowed from a poem by E. E. Cummings. Later, he visited Toledo, Madrid, Córdoba, and spent time in Mallorca, where he wrote his first compositions. Cage returned to Spain on numerous occasions: in 1966, with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company; in 1972, for the *Pamplona Encounters*; and he stayed several times in Cadaqués with Duchamp. After the death of Duchamp, the International Music Festival of Cadaqués invited Cage to present a concert in his memory, and the following year Cage was invited to give the opening talk for an exhibition about the artist, curated by Gloria Moure. Invited again by her in 1991, he displayed his series of prints and drawings *Ryoanji* (1983–92) and the sound installation *Essay* (1991). The same year he participated in the Madrid Autumn Festival, where he was honoured.

In 1956, Hidalgo was living in Milan, where he met David Tudor and began a very fruitful collaboration with Walter Marchetti, whom he met in the composition class of Bruno Maderna.[11] Tudor introduced Hidalgo to Cage's work. The young composer had already heard Cage's *String Quartet in Four Parts* (1950), which had disappointed him, and it was Tudor who explained to him the technical procedures of the work and thus helped him to understand the Cageian proposal.

In a programme of concerts at the Darmstadt summer courses on 28 July 1957, entitled *Webern und die Junge Generation*, Hidalgo presented *Ukanga* (1957), a serial work for five chamber ensembles; it was performed by the Dresden Chamber Orchestra and conducted by Maderna. Hence, Hidalgo became the first Spanish composer to have his music performed at Darmstadt, whereas the piece was only premièred in Spain fourteen years later (Astiárraga and Martín de Argila 1997, 307). The following year, the same in which Cage gave his famous courses, Hidalgo presented *Caurga* (1958), for seven players. This work was presented alongside works by Italian composers including Marchetti, with his work *Spazi 2* (1958). According to Bonomo, both composers were ready to provide a first reaction to the dogmatism of total serialism (2009, 210), which demonstrates the importance of Hidalgo's first meeting with Cage.

In fact, the compositional process for *Caurga* is still serial but obeys a more pointillist conception, announcing a disaffection with serialism in Hidalgo's work.[12] Indeed, he explained, during the recording of the work in 1979, that he had decided towards the middle of the work to continue the compositional process by eye, and he realised that the result would be the same from the listener's point of view. It would not be possible to know exactly what was composed following the strict method, and what was not. As Hidalgo stated, 'from that day onward, serialism/structuralism in music held no interest for me. Structural or not structural? This was no longer the question' (as cited in Medina 1983, 48).

In this state of mind, Hidalgo, with Tudor, attended the three seminars on 'Composition as Process' that Cage presented at Darmstadt. In the third one, entitled 'Communication', Cage explained the differences between the American and the European avant-garde (Cage 1973a, 53), namely:

1. European works present a harmoniousness, a drama, or a poetry, that refers more to the composers than to the listeners. Many of the works of the Americans, on the other hand, placed listeners as a central element without division between listeners and performers in the physical space;
2. Which means that there is no difference between the type of listening during a concert and before and after it; that is the dissolution of the separation between art and life;
3. Americans included more silence in their works. Inherent silence is equivalent to denial of the will.

If, in 1954, Hans Curjel felt that Cage was close to Boulez, Nono, and Stockhausen on an aesthetic level, the distance was now clear (Iddon 2013, 174). In the meantime,

in 1957, Boulez wrote *Aléa*, an article in which, without mentioning Cage, he attacked the radical use of chance operations (1966, 41).[13] The central position of listeners, the non-distinction between art and life, and the denial of will by composers, implied not only a divergence concerning the method of composition, but also a radically different attitude towards music and the place that it should occupy in society.

Against the musical dialectic of European music, American works were, essentially, non-dualistic (Cage 1993a, 81).[14] In this context, it is important to emphasise Heinz-Klaus Metzger's role in Cage's reception and in the consideration of integral serialism as dogmatic or orthodox versus Cage's freedom and anarchy. First a defender of serialism but also a follower of Adorno, Metzger highlighted in the late 50s the 'rejection of organization' in Cage, denying, in contrast to Adorno, that this implied an abdication of the individual. However, Metzger's text did not seek to argue with Adorno but rather to reconcile the philosopher's stance against the New Music with the Cageian proposal, showing that, in Cage, there is a music whose content is political and social:

> [P]olitically engaged music has rarely been successful. It can only express its engagement through its external choice of text, as vocal or music theater, where, not accidentally, the assimilation of its immanent form-complex to the stupefying slogans of a mass movement organized according to the leader-principle testifies to a reactionary identification in musical terms as well. […] Through the spectacular element of decomposition, Cage's disorganization of musical coherence, as of the performing ensemble that has nothing more to represent, may be understood as an attempt to place immanent musical meaning in accord with the bluntness of a political appeal. (Metzger 1997, 55)

After Darmstadt, the next meeting of Hidalgo and Marchetti with Cage took place in Milan before the publication of Metzger's article in Italy. Cage stayed, from November 1958 to March 1959, at the *Studio di Fonologia* at *Radio Audizione Italiana* (RAI), invited by Luciano Berio, where he composed *Fontana Mix* (1958). He used this work to write *Aria* (1958) for Cathy Berberian, and both *Sounds of Venice* (1959) and *Water Walk* (1959) for his participation in the weekly quiz show *Lascia o raddoppia* [Double or Nothing]. In both works, Cage gave a list of twenty props, instruments, and noise-makers. In the case of *Sounds of Venice*, the objects and sounds were to provide a sonorous image of the city, including a toy cat that meows, a cage of canaries, a piston flute, a toy rattle, a flute, a ringing phone, a carafe of water, and a container for water, as well as an amplifier, microphone and four recorders, among other things. For *Water Walk* there were pianos, kitchen equipment, radios, and water in its three possible forms—solid, liquid, and gaseous. The sound sources were distributed as widely as possible in the space surrounding the pianists. The performers were in movement most of the time. The name of the piece points to the principal element used, and the fact that performers walk while performing –'unlike Handel's, it really splashes' (Cage, as cited in Revill 1992, 160). With these works, as explained by Metzger, the premises of a new music theatre were created (1997, 61). Hidalgo and Marchetti

were impressed in particular by *Sounds of Venice*, marking the path that they would choose to follow:

> One day he did one of them, an action piece called *Sounds of Venice* and it really interested us and we talked about it with him. He told us that he would be inclined toward the music, but from then on what attracted us were the actions. (Hidalgo cited in Hac Mor and Xargay 2004)

On 7 March 1960, Cage's *Theater Piece* for one to eight unspecified performers was performed. As Pritchett explains, this piece 'shows a kinship with *Sounds of Venice* and *Water Walk*, in which *Fontana Mix* was applied to specific collections of theatrical properties' (1993, 134). Hidalgo and Marchetti followed this line opened by Cage for action pieces, giving them their own particular character.

During Cage's stay in Milan, Hidalgo also began to experiment with electroacoustic techniques in the RAI studio, with the Peruvian composer Leopoldo La Rosa and Marchetti. Together they organised their first concert of experimental music in Italy. They presented works by European and American composers who shared a similar aesthetic: open or indeterminate music. The concert took place at the Rotonda del Pellegrini in Milan on 21 January 1959. *Ciu Music Quartet* (1959) and *Offenes Trio* (1959) by Hidalgo were first performed there. The titles of the works are significant. In the first one, CIU is an acronym of the *Club Internazionale Universitario*, the sponsor of the concert. The latter sets out the aesthetics of the work (Bonomo 2009, 206). Both are composed to be performed either with the traditional instrumental distribution or with the instruments distributed spatially around the room as required. As explained by Hidalgo: 'Undetermined spatial distribution is another characteristic of "open music". It allows each version of the same piece to have different results, according to the spatial distribution' (1997, 364). The transition from total serialism to open works was complete and, after this concert, Hidalgo and Marchetti were 'decollaged' by supporters of the European international style (Sarmiento 1998, 63).

Back in Spain, Hidalgo organised, with Marchetti and the painter Manolo Millares (1926–1972), *Siete días de nueva música* [Seven Days of New Music], the first contemporary music festival in Las Palmas, during the summer of 1959. Later, in 1960, they came to Barcelona with a letter from Millares to the poet Joan Brossa (1919–1998). Through Brossa, they came into contact with Joan Prats, a member of the *Club 49*. This club was formed by entrepreneurs, liberal professionals, art critics, and artists, Prats among them, and was set up to promote cultural activities.[15] *Club 49* had contributed, since the 1950s, to the opening up of Catalonia to the international scene by bringing in artists and intellectuals, when the regime fostered only nationalism and tradition. On 3 February 1960, in one of their concerts, Hidalgo and Marchetti performed *Milán-Piano* (1959), and *Wuppertal Two Pianos* (1959) in its first and second version, both by Hidalgo, as well as *Piano Music* (1959), first version with prepared piano and second version, and *Jable* (1959), both by Marchetti, at the studios of Radio Barcelona. In these works, we find instructions to the performers that require them to take into consideration the theatrical consideration of their gestures. For this reason, it is considered that this event marked the birth of action art in Spain (Barber 1978a, 24; Camps 1988).

The arrival of Hidalgo in Barcelona was important for the development of concerts of contemporary music. Together with Josep Maria Mestres Quadreny (b. Manresa, 1929), and with the complicity of Prats, they founded the *Música Oberta* [Open Music] project. The motto of this project, inspired by *Club 49*, was 'Open music, active music, music of yesterday, today and tomorrow'. The inaugural concert, held on 11 May 1960 and combining music from older Spanish composers and the younger generation, was a public scandal (Guinjoan and Mestres Quadreny 1988, 23). The knowledge of Cage's compositional methods through Hidalgo and Marchetti was important to Mestres Quadreny, who began to work with chance, although the way in which he incorporated it progressively moved away from Cage (García 2011).

The most important concert in this cycle was Tudor's concert on 10 November 1960, at the Auditorium of the Colegio de Abogados in Barcelona. Tudor performed works by Bo Nilsson, Marchetti, Wolff, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Hidalgo, Sylvano Bussotti, and Cage. The same concert was held two days later, at the Instituto Internacional in Madrid. The musicologist Manuel Valls Gorina commented as follows on the performance in Barcelona:

> We have recently witnessed an act announced as a piano concert in which the pianist—David Tudor—suitably equipped with a pipe, a whistle, and a radio, sitting in front of a piano (this last considered as a piece of furniture) offered the varied spectacle in which the clanging (?) of these instruments alternates with the fortunate finding of a parasitic zone in the listener. In the course of this concert, blows are imparted, suitably spaced, on the piano in order to rip unusual sonorities from its bosom. Like Monsieur Jourdan, Molière's famous character, we now learn that what the angry neighbour banging the table at the audacity of radio programmes is really doing is playing a musical composition. (1962, 282)

To open up the field of music in Spain was a difficult task and not economically profitable. Aware of such difficulties, Hidalgo and Marchetti decided to go to Madrid, but the musical scene in Madrid was a desert for them and they soon left. Hidalgo went to work for six months in the *Service de la Recherche de la Radio Télévision Française* (ORTF), directed by Pierre Schaeffer in Paris, while Marchetti returned to Milan. During his stay, Hidalgo composed *Étude de Stage* (1961) and *Música en cinta* (1961), the first pieces of musique concrète by a Spanish composer. Hidalgo described *Música en cinta* in this way:

> [It] is a concrete composition composed for four tapes with four different sound sources […] As an exercise in virtuosity, Schaeffer instructed us not to use any electronic process which could alter the recorded sounds in this composition. We were to work only with sounds in their pure state, using only de-magnetised scissors to cut the tape and shorten the sounds if necessary. This is why the only technique we used was that of cutting and pasting tape, with no other kind of manipulation: the "barber shop" technique, as John Cage would say. (1997, 361)[16]

Hidalgo was familiar with this simplicity from his experience with Cage in Milan. The same year he wrote his first action text, *A Letter for David Tudor* (2 June 1961),

a mail-art piece, in which there is a collective sending of a letter written by Hidalgo. This work includes two versions: 'for a pianist, piano and as many objects as necessary' and 'for two or more performers'. Both versions were to be interpreted together, giving rise, in Marco's words, to a very difficult performance that forces the interpreter to perform simultaneous activities such as eating, drinking, making tea and playing the piano. In addition, with the help of other people, the performer has to invite the public to sign a letter addressed to Tudor (as cited in Perez 2018, 75). During this period, he also struck up a friendship with Iannis Xenakis, who advised him to study Zen Buddhism in depth, which he would do on his return to Milan.

From 1962 to 1964, he delved into Chinese and Japanese culture in his studies at the ISMEO (Institute for the Middle and Far East) in Milan and Rome, and composed the instrumental piece *JA-U-LA* (1963). This was inspired by a poem by Wang Wei and, despite its name—*jaula* means 'cage' in Spanish—it is not a tribute to Cage. Hidalgo explains that 'three different readings of the mechanism of the 28 ideograms [4 verses of 7 ideograms] […] making up the poem automatically provided the musical parameters of *JA-U-LA*' (Siemens 1997, 359). He also continued working with open music and action music in works such as *Roma dos pianos* (1963), *Aulaga 2* (1964) for clarinet and piano, and the four *Armandías* (1964), for one or two grand pianos and between three and eight pianists—three of unspecified duration and one fixed at 13 minutes.

Meanwhile, Cage wondered about the departure of Hidalgo and Marchetti from Spain in these terms:

> Hidalgo's gone to Paris and Marchetti's gone to Milan and Spain is left without anyone. What we need now is not disarmament and people marching in the streets but someone; someone active in Spain interested in modern art. Why do they all leave it? What is wrong with Spain? (1973a, 241–242)

With this accusation, recalling the militant character of the first avant-garde, Cage reproached Spain. This country was not a fertile place to develop the musical proposals of Hidalgo and Marchetti, but it was not completely barren. The 1961–62 season at the *Instituto de Estudios Norteamericanos* (IEN) in Barcelona included a cycle of concerts to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Cage's music, with programme notes provided by Mestres Quadreny. In 1962, Wolf Vostell participated in the May Salon, a competition created by the Association of Contemporary Artists in Barcelona, with a *decollage*.

The Zaj Group

In July 1964, Marchetti and Hidalgo returned to Madrid. Together with Barce, they created Zaj—which remained active until 1996, though its presence from 1974 was sporadic—and which, following avant-garde principles, did not distinguish between art and life; the idea was to demystify the art-as-object and advocate for art-in-action. The name of the group, like Dada, has no particular meaning. Zaj was

born in the same year that saw the commemoration of 25 Years of Spanish Peace, carried out at the request of the Ministry of Information and Tourism. Cristóbal Halffter and Luis de Pablo, among others, were invited to the *Concierto de la Paz* [Concert of Peace] (Contreras 2016). It was also the year in which the 1st International Biennial of Contemporary Music of Madrid was held (Ferrer 2019). To understand Zaj in Spain we need to ask what Zaj did. Zaj comprised zaj actions consisting of concerts, removals, travels, music, mail-art, books, cards, and zaj *etcéteras* —that is a 'public document' as the Chinese say (*gong an*) or the Japanese (*kō an*)' (Hidalgo 2004, 23). Esther Ferrer, José Luis Castillejo (1930–2014), Miguel Ángel Coria (1937–2016), Tomás Marco (b. Madrid, 1942), and others became part of Zaj. In this sense, Llorenç Barber has highlighted the heterogeneity of Zaj, stressing that '[f]rom a distance, people speak of Zaj (and especially of its most direct protagonists) as "a group", when in reality there were several zaj and very different ways to join or collaborate with Zaj' (2009, 75–76) (Figure 1).

But, what is Zaj? 'Zaj is like a bar. People come in, go out, have a drink, and leave a tip' wrote Marchetti in a Zaj card. Zaj carried out actions evoking the Dadaist and Futurist evenings, and Cage's music theatre, with the aroma of Zen Buddhism. Their first proposals must be understood within the framework of so-called action music (Carreño 1998; Molina 2007). For them, music is not exclusively sound-based. This assertion implied a questioning of notation and again the openness of the field of music. Thus, with Zaj, one could attend the most radical destruction in Spain of the ceremonial art—visually and aurally speaking—of the actions of everyday life, encompassing therefore non-logical modes of action. 'Zaj is Zaj because Zaj is not Zaj', Hidalgo said with a nod to Dada (as cited in Ferrer 1994, 24).

Zaj is, in the words of Ferrer, 'a vacuum that each one fills as he can, and perhaps, like the cup of TAO, that is its utility' (1994, 24): Zaj is a fertile void. Despite knowing that trying to fill this void is fruitless, in a scholarly sense, we will focus on the first Zaj concert programme, so as to establish the main characteristics of Zaj. The first Zaj action was carried out on 19 November 1964: Hidalgo, Marchetti, and Barce performed a *Zaj Removal*, carrying objects through the streets and squares of Madrid, a retroactive event announced days later in the first Zaj card. The card was the invitation, sent by mail, to an event that had taken place two days earlier. The development of the event was explained in detail: aim, tools, route, distance in metres, and exact timing; it took place in the time and space of ordinary life. Therefore, the card provided all the information, but all the art ceremonies were emptied out. This action of a Duchampian bent reminds us that it is the public who finalises the work of art, in the sense of the 'artistic coefficient' established by the French artist (Duchamp 1973, 139). The artist is only the one who proposes something, and the public decides whether or not to turn it into a work of art. In the case of the *Zaj Removal*, even the idea of the public attending the spectacle had disappeared. The public is common, the collective of individuals.

Two days later, the first Zaj concert took place at the Colegio Mayor Menéndez Pelayo in Madrid. The works performed were Cage's *4′33″* (1952) and *Variations III*

Figure 1. Zaj Members—from Left to Right, Esther Ferrer, Juan Hidalgo, and Walter Marchetti—Posing with John Cage. © Vicente Carretón Cano.

(1963), Marchetti's *Piano music 2* (1961) and *Ailanthus* (1964), Barce's *Estudio de impulsos* (1964) and *Abgrund, Hintergrund* (1964), and Hidalgo's *A Letter for David Tudor* and *El recorrido japonés* (1963). This programme and the text presenting this first concert of music theatre, signed by Hidalgo, provided the basic elements that made up the Zaj approach. Divided into four paragraphs, the text declared:

1. The purpose of their works lies in the atmosphere that is created and the objects exhibited. These works are based on 'a love of allusions, common daily action, and the emphasis of illogical ways of acting';

2. After wars, the arts and all human activities have suffered hard and beneficial shocks, 'what was inadmissible yesterday, is no longer so today. And tomorrow?';
3. Recalling the Tudor concert in 1960, he asks: 'Have four years gone by for us and for experimental music?';
4. Pointing out that from the beginning, both eyes and ears have had a role in experimental music, it is necessary to tell the public not to forget your ears, those of you whose eyes are at the front. And the programme ends: 'a is a because a is not a'. (Sarmiento 2007, n.p.)

Therefore, the programme sets out some of the key elements that establish the connection of Zaj with the early avant-garde and their contemporaries in the international avant-garde scene, such as Fluxus. The list of works based on everyday actions, the illogical way of acting, and the love of evocations that transcend the work itself, all refer to Dada, to listening to the environment with *4′33″*, to Zen, along with Duchamp and the readymade. In Zaj events, these objects can be sonorous, luminous, tactile, olfactory, gestural, etc. In particular, their interpretation of *4′33″* was performed with the interpreter placed in a cage that had been built with the wooden slats from the previous performance.

The creation of an atmosphere was decisive, and referred to a structure of time and space that is characterised by its neatness and accuracy, tracking procedures that were already used in the instrumental works of Hidalgo—such as *Ukanga*. The creation of this atmosphere was closely related to the importance given to the object, a new mode of production of the work in the pure present. But it was not a haphazard preparation; all actions were based on a previous work, in which parts were notated in a score. This score was not alone in corresponding to musical tradition, and could be verbal or graphic as well as musical.

Such an atmosphere hence became a presence, and it took into account the relationship with public perception, which took part in the process. For this reason, although randomness does not fit into the preparation of the pieces, it could be present in the unrequested reactions of the public. In this regard, Charles explains that Zaj faithfully followed the Cageian assertion that composing, performing, and listening are three different things (1983, 163). This fact emphasised the primacy of presence in the creation of the atmosphere, which led Charles to assert that the principal characteristics of the Zaj group were 'inconstancy and impermanence', and that Zaj opened 'the performance to the most absolute non-power: that of oblivion' (1983, 163–164). Within such an atmosphere, and beside Duchamp's readymade, we find the influence of the Cageian approach to theatre understood as life (Cage 1981, 165). But its formulation and its execution were peculiar to Zaj and differed greatly from Fluxus. Asked about the difference between the two groups, Hidalgo responded with humour: 'the same as that between Buster Keaton and the Marx Brothers' (as cited in Bonet 1987).[17] Finally, ears are as important as eyes in Zaj concerts, agreeing with Cage that 'an ear alone is not a being' (1973a, 31).

Besides, the contact with Zen Buddhism, that is with Cage and his own experience, led Hidalgo to break with the principle of identity and non-contradiction. This feature became explicit in the Zaj concerts, where there is no opposition between seeing and listening: 'Zaj is more Nô than Nô' (Cage in Charles 2002, 210). As stated above, the concert included *El recorrido japonés*, an indeterminate work, and *A Letter for David Tudor*, in which everything is specified and the only thing left to the discretion of the performer is to send the letter or not. Once again, for Hidalgo, determination and indeterminacy are not oppositional, and Zaj's performances are actions in which action and non-action are not separated (Charles 1983, 164). Thus, the importance of Zen thought and non-duality was one of the most important characteristics of Zaj, because of:

> its work of 'emptying' words of vain concepts; its attention to their literality and to the possibility that, far from the binary approaches which have shaped Western thought (Heraclitus aside), the poles are not opposites but, as happens with the famous yin and yang (universes of black and white, feminine and masculine, or day and night) complementary'. (Perez 2018, 112)

The foreign specialist press took note of the first Zaj concert, establishing a direct relationship between Dadaism, Cage, and Zaj, stating that 'Dadaism is alive again' (Haines 1967, 78). With regard to the Spanish press of the time, as explained by Bozal, 'even in 1967, critics at a zaj concert were still able to oscillate between those that paternally reprimanded or were tolerant—and those that, without further ado, supported a prohibition by "those who are properly equipped", i.e. the police' (1997, 348). That same year, the minister of home affairs, General Alonso Vega, banned the presentation of Zaj in national theatres after the scandal of their performance in the Beatriz theatre, for 'promoting anarchy'. In Spain, the actions of Zaj were understood as being linked to the social context in which they arose, which has largely hampered adequate analysis within the artistic field: the problems of interpreting Zaj exceed strictly musical issues, or music itself. As Marco, who joined Zaj in 1965–66, explained, 'Zaj would not be the same after Zaj' (1968, 11). This link with the social context was revisited some years later by Hidalgo in his work *Zajografía* (1975) (see footnote 10). In this way he made evident the link between an artistic practice considered since Cage as anarchic, and the social anarchism embodied by Durruti, the leader of the CNT (National Confederation of Workers), who died during the civil war on the Republican side.

The atmosphere created by Zaj opened up a world of possibility. It was true for Zaj actions in the context created after World War II. Yet Hidalgo wondered whether it would still be possible tomorrow. With Zaj, the musical situation of post-war Europe was reproduced in Spain: de Pablo would be the Spanish Boulez, representing the official avant-garde, while Hidalgo would be the Spanish Cage (Barber 1978a, 14–15). With this statement, Barber reminds us of something that had been recognised since the early 1970s: the distinction drawn between one avant-garde and another in

European classical music, mirrored in Spain. The one to which Zaj belonged was irrationalist in the words of García-Alcalde (1971, 44). The other, which included, De Pablo or Cristóbal Halffter among others, was, we must suppose, more rational. However, Hidalgo himself did not feel like a representative of Cage, but rather someone who was following a path that had stemmed from Cage. In a letter to Higgins, dated 30 March 1966 in Madrid, Hidalgo referred to the three paths that music would follow:

1. The European path of Darmstadt, which he called the European international style;
2. The American path of Cage;
3. The European path illuminated by direct contact with Cage (the path of Marchetti and his own) and which he felt was ignored by the other two (Sarmiento 1998, 64).

Higgins responded on 4 April 1966 by saying that they were not alone, since the third path was not exclusive to their situation—citing Kaprow, Vostell and himself with their events, and also Philip Corner (Sarmiento 1998, 64–65). The way that the third path remained faithful to Cageian principles and was therefore no longer Cage's is succinctly explained by Charles:

> How do you think Zaj interpreted Cage's silent music at their first 'official' concert in 1964 in the *Salón de Actos del Colegio Mayor Menéndez Pelayo*? The answer is, of course, without reiterating the *4′33″* rite as if it were a seemingly immortalised, or at least perpetuated, tradition (set by the jurisprudence of the event known as David Tudor, piano, Maverick Hall, 1952). '*Tacet. Any instrument or combination of instruments*' does not mean that, for all eternity, a pianist should ostensibly, according to the duration of the three movements of the work, first close and then open the lid of the piano. For Zaj, this might mean: for 4′15″, remain still inside a kind of cage made of four wooden planks and during the remaining 18 seconds, pull on the rope that holds it up until it is hauled up to the ceiling … ¿son … o […]? In this way, upon being rethought, the spirit of what Cage wanted is preserved: Zaj 'repeats' Cage while forgetting him … and the performance of *4′33″* ceases to be, as are all interpretations of works of musical repertory, a simple commemoration. (1983, 164)

4′33″ is again a cage without bars, as was Cage for Zaj.[18]

Carles Santos and Llorenç Barber: The Pleasure of Sound

The Merce Cunningham Dance Company and Carles Santos

In 1966, Hidalgo participated in the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS), from 9 to 11 September in London, with *Música para seis condones y un intérprete varón* [Music for six condoms and a male performer], and in December the Zaj 3 Festival took place in Barcelona. Hidalgo, Marchetti, Marco, and Carles Santos[19] performed Marchetti's *La caccia* [The Hunt] (1965), among other works, in Park Güell. Meanwhile, Hidalgo helped to prepare the first venue for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company with Cage.

On 29 July 1966, Cage performed for the first time in Spain and did so with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, in Sitges (Wildenhahn 1966; Cage ([1968] 1985), 85–88; Pizà 2016). The trip was financially supported with the profits from the sale of a lithograph by Joan Miró, who was present with the company in Paris in 1964. The action was organised by *Club 49*, of which Miró was a member; several other institutions also sponsored the event. The musical part was carried out by Tudor and Gordon Mumma, both directed by Cage.[20] Mestres Quadreny enthusiastically described the event: 'The performance of the spectacle was a success. An expectant public filled the *Teatro Prado* to the brim and applauded the artists fervently; I even saw a few of Madrid's young composers' (as cited in Pizà 2016, 150).

The critics praised the show in the national press. For instance, Llopis (1966; pseudonym of the writer Arturo Llorens Opisso) explained that Cage helped, with his compositions, to create 'this magical atmosphere' that Cunningham set up. Days before the performance, the composer Xavier Montsalvatge also highlighted the magic in the work which, for him, was to be found in the dancing. In contrast, and rather elegantly, he alluded to its absence in Cage's music:

> There are a huge number—seventy or more—of John Cage's works that Cunningham has brought to the stage giving them a new dimension that was, perhaps, what they lacked, what they needed to make them directly assailable; by giving them an exact and magical applied sense, he converts into images, into gestures, into visual eurhythmy, the substrate of the sonorous lucubration of the famous North American musical aesthete. (Montsalvatge 1966, 48)

Brossa and Santos attended this event. Although Brossa's actions and concerts of action can be placed within an aesthetic close to Cage, the encounter between the two artists was no more than cordial.[21] Brossa had created *Sord-Mut. Peça en un acte* [Deaf-mute, Piece in one act] (1947), which consists of opening the curtain, waiting for a few minutes, and then closing the curtain; this silent proposal is unquestionably close to *4′33″*. Years later, he created *El Ganxo* [The Hook] (1957), *Tres cançons de bresol* [Three lullabies] (1959), *Satana* (1960), and *Tríptic Carnavalesc* [Carnival Triptych] (1965), exemplifying the alternation of music and text with the salience of actions.

The concerts of Mestres Quadreny with Brossa, organised within the milieu of *Club 49*, are often cited as the first manifestations of action art in Catalonia (Camps 1988, 217)—for example in *Ópera 60* (1960) and *Suite Bufa* (1966), directed by Brossa, with music by Mestres Quadreny and played by Santos, accompanied by the singer Anna Ricci and the dancer Terri Mestres. Sánchez has described the formal change involving the reduction of scenery and dance, with the assistance of Brossa at the event of Sitges (2006, 91). Santos emphasises, however, that previous actions by Brossa were already headed in this direction, recalling his silent piece.[22] In this sense, it is important to underline the continuity between the proposals of Zaj and the Catalan action art movement that developed in the 1970s (Camps 1988, 226). This line was highlighted by the friendships among some of their representatives: for example, Hidalgo dedicated an *etcétera* to Santos in 1967; Brossa also wrote *Concierto irregular* [Irregular Concert]

(1968), with music by Santos, directed by Pere Portabella and performed by Santos alongside Anna Ricci, in a concert held at the Maeght Foundation to celebrate Miró's 75th birthday. This event echoed the horizontal relationship between the arts that Cage and Cunningham advocated in their actions.

After this first period under Brossa's influence, Santos spent six months in New York, thanks to a grant from the Maeght Foundation. During the stay, he was in touch with Cage, Feldman, Brown, and Tudor, among others, a fundamental experience that provided him some independence from Brossa for the first time. He found in New York an atmosphere of freedom that compelled him to go his own way (Ruvira 2006, 179). Cage, Dadaist music, or Marcel Duchamp *in* the music, as he defined it, embodied the expression of that freedom. Cage completed what, for him, had been his academic training. He believed that Bach and Cage somehow shared space in music: if they had met, they would have understood each other (Cóppulo 2014).[23] The composer's only book to date opens and closes with verbal transcriptions of two musical scores, respectively by Bach and Cage (Santos 2006).

Santos was influenced by this spirit of freedom that emanated from Cage, but he also incorporated the principles of repetitive music in his own fashion, related to the experiences of his local Mediterranean landscape. Although Tom Johnson qualified him as a 'passionate minimalist', his 'music and this classification is much more complex' (Ruvira 1999, 220–221). Conceptual art became an added influence through his participation in the *Grup de Treball* [Working Group] of Barcelona from 1971 to 1974. Earlier, his relationship with the Spanish 'official avant-garde' was terminated once and for all after the infamous concert which took place in March 1970 at the French Institute in Madrid. The programme included Luis de Pablo's *Móvil II* (1959/67), but Santos first performed *Piano Phase* (1967) by Steve Reich. He played for nearly two hours until he was removed by the police from the stage, denouncing the fact that there were 'different' avant-gardes. De Pablo would never speak to him again. Asked about the links between the avant-gardes in Madrid and Barcelona in those years, Santos went on to say that, politically speaking, people in Barcelona tended to be left-leaning, while in Madrid there was always a stronger relationship with the central administration. In spite of their differences, and the fact that De Pablo accepted influential positions during the Franco regime, he thought he helped to normalise the Spanish situation with respect to the European one (Ferrero 2016). However, it should be noted that what was normalised was a *particular* avant-garde, represented by an officialism characterised by a return to tradition —started between 1968 and 1972—to the discredit of the avant-garde in general (Barber 2003, 55). The situation was, however, more complicated, as we will see with the Pamplona Encounters.

In the early 1970s, Santos dedicated himself to the diffusion of contemporary music, particularly as conductor of the *Grup Instrumental Català* [Catalan Instrumental Ensemble], co-founded with Mestres Quadreny and based at the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona, but from 1978 he decided to perform his own music exclusively. His first album, *Carles Santos: Piano* (1971), contains works by Cowell, Cage, Webern,

Stockhausen, and Mestres Quadreny; ten years later, the discography of his own work began with *Voice Tracks* (1981), issued in New York and with reviews by Jackson Mac Low, who had studied with Cage. The recording is a collection of vocal pieces performed by Santos. The voice is revealed in the form of onomatopoeias, whispers, grunts, and alliterations in pieces such as *To-ca-ti-co-to-ca-tà* (1978), along with the piano. Here, the instrument becomes a fetish/object: 'this furniture-instrument adopts the following relationships: piano/torture, piano/work, piano/friend, piano/desire' (Ruvira 1999, 221). The recording coincided with his return to New York. In April 1980, he participated in the 12th International Sound Poetry Festival in New York. Next, he gave one of his better-known performances, in the boxing ring at the Bobby Gleason Gym: *The Heavyweight Sound Fight* (1981), a musical combat with American composer Charlie Morrow, somehow echoing the Fluxus boxing event organised by Dick Higgins in the mid 60s (Johnson 1981). Along with Fluxus, we can be sure that the figure of Arthur Cravan was also kept in mind by Santos. Later, his *La meua filla sóc jo* [I Am My Daughter] (2005), a small-format opera, was presented as a tribute to Cage's *4′33″*. Structured in a series of short scenes, this work has no plot. The identity of the character/performer is questioned through psalms, recitations, litanies, enumerations, and parallels. On the stage, the musicians, without a conductor and without music stands, carry their instruments from one place to another, chasing the singers.

As also happened with Hidalgo, Santos has produced a wide range of visual work. In his incursions into cinema, visual poems, photography, and opera, he has been in charge of the visual elements: seeing and listening are two senses that are not in opposition. For him, his visual work is a consequence of the display of the music. His openness to all the sounds of Cage was already present in his early films such as *L'àpat* [The Meal] (1967) and *La cadira* [The chair] (1968), where the musical composition integrates the sounds of the environment:

> On the basis of the musical specificity, I create an interrelation by means of different semiotic levels (the piano music, the singing, the mime, etc.), which results in a structure that is difficult to classify, where all the parts are inseparable and the overall determining factor is my own attitude when faced with the musical phenomenon. (Santos cited in Ponce 1999, 238)

Santos has created an individual, unclassifiable style, in which the learning of the conservatory and the avant-garde were enlivened. Thus, the tributes in his works to Bach, Brossa or Cage do not repeat these models but rather acquire his own voice. The musical phenomenon is, according to Santos, a space of freedom and pleasure; music 'does not force you to do anything but enjoy it' (as cited in Miró 1999, 244).

Llorenç Barber and the *Pamplona Encounters*

Music—and hearing—is a pleasure for Barber (2003). From the provinces, and unhappy with the teachings at the conservatory, he devoted himself to reading

everything he could find on the most avant-garde music of the moment in Spain: Barce, de Pablo, Marco, or Montsalvatge. In 1969, he attended a summer course at Darmstadt for the first time, and was enthused by Dieter Schnebel, Roy Hart, and Vinko Globokar. Next, 1970 would be a fundamental year in his career for two reasons. First, he attended a Zaj concert on 14 March in Valencia, which ended in a great scandal. After the concert, Barber introduced himself to Hidalgo and, to his surprise, after a few days he received an envelope with Zaj cuttings and cards. Second, three months thereafter, Barber began to read Cage's *Silence*. As he explained, it was a slowly-digested, still-unfinished reading, but Cage's long text contributed greatly to shaping his position with regard to what he had been doing since 1969 as a musician, music activist, concert performer, and reader (Barber 2003, 16). But Barber, like Santos, belonged to another generation, with a minimalist sensibility that instilled the pleasure of sound within him. His first work, *Homenaje en D* [Homage in D] (1971), dedicated to his teacher Daniel de Nueda (Gil Noé 2015, 290), is already a good example (Figure 2).

Cage was not an actual teacher, but rather a propitiator of a post-Cageian sensibility; something similar happened with Hidalgo, who gave Barber some lessons in 1972, when he moved to Madrid.[24] But Zaj left important traces, so much so that Barber, like a Zajian of a new generation, contemplated Zaj as the subject of his master thesis in art history (Barber 1978a). For Barber, Zaj meant a catastrophe, 'putting into a visceral form that which, until that moment, had been called music' (2003, 18). Moreover, he met Cage during the *Pamplona Encounters* of 1972, and afterward in Milan, Venice, La Rochelle, Chicago, and Madrid.

Figure 2. Llorenç Barber Performing Cage during the First Concert of Actum, in 1974. With permission of the composer.

The *Pamplona Encounters* (26 June–3 July 1972) represented a before and after in the general development of art in Spain. Organised by de Pablo and José Luis Alexanco (b. Madrid, 1942), the event gathered together Cage, Hossein Malek, Luc Ferrari, Trần Văn Khê, Steve Reich, Mauricio Kagel, and Zaj. There was also local folk music on the *txalaparta* (Basque percussion instrument made of wood or stone), performed by the Arze brothers, who were great admirers of Cage. After the Encounters, Zaj went on tour in the USA and its members next left Spain: Hidalgo and Marchetti settled again in Milan and Ferrer in Paris. Compared to the 1960s, the 1970s were not auspicious times for experimental music. In the *Pamplona Encounters*, the minimalist sensibility was stirred in Barber through Steve Reich's *Drumming* (1970–71), performed by an instrumental group consisting of Michael Nyman, Gavin Bryars, Cornelius Cardew, and Alvin Curran with Laura Dean's dance company, which could be heard alongside Cage's *Sixty-two Mesostics Re Merce Cunningham* (1971), as well as the electroacoustic composition *Untitled* (1972) by Tudor. By 'minimalist sensibility' he meant the pleasure obtained from sound, from its repetition.[25] Nevertheless, and unlike American minimalism, this repetition does not occur in a highly-organised or deductive way in Barber's own music.

The *Pamplona Encounters* marked the end of a celebration of experimental art in Spain (Navallas 1997; Díaz Cuyás 2009). This reality should not hide the emergence of a new avant-garde with another sensibility, such as the minimalism represented by Santos and Barber. In this context, Barber created in 1973 the Group *Actum* with José Luis Berenguer (b. Barcelona, 1940). Unlike Zaj, the sound of Actum was even present in its physical form and the public that, after the performance, were invited to join the project. Musicians such as Salvador Porter (1942–2011) or Joan Cerveró (b. Manises, 1961) joined Actum. In Barber's (1978b) words: 'Music for Actum is: an act which is a feast for the body, self-indulgence that proclaims pleasure for everyone, regardless of class, race, or nation'.

Actum, which means 'action' in Latin, related to Zaj's idea of doing—proposing a type of score and concert that consisted of participatory, instinctive minimalism which Barber called Mediterranean baroque.[26] Actum meant non-teleological music, in the Cageian sense. The first Actum concert in 1974[27] included Cage's *4′33″* and *TV Köln* (1958), as well as Barber's *Panta* (1973), a music action reminiscent of *4′ 33″*, and Zaj actions (Gil Noé 2015, 324). They performed a tribute concert to Cage in Valencia on 22 December 1975, where an article written by Barber (1976) was provided. It marks the beginning of a set of short texts devoted to the American composer over time, as well as a monographic book (Barber 1985). In the aforementioned concert, there were various sound sources—singing and spoken voices, live and recorded, sounding simultaneously with a piano which moved among the members of the audience, who were standing around the space—a kind of *musicircus* performed with a timed score in which all the pieces had their time. This heterodox polyphony, which also involved one of the dolls used by the *Equipo Crónica* for the *Pamplona Encounters*, was interrupted toward the end of the concert by a large group of demonstrators who sought protection from the police in the hall (Gil Noé 2015, 303).

During the period of Actum (1973–83), Barber's work was characterised as action music, as in *Proposiciones de placer* [Pleasure Propositions] (1974) or *Música nuda* [Nude Music] (1980), with a beautiful graphic score. In 1978, Actum premièred in Spain Hidalgo's *Rrose Sélavy* (1975), and the same year Barber was invited to London by Music Context, where he met Nyman, Bryars, and the *London Musicians Collective*. He also discovered Schafer's (1977) theoretical work in London. This experience, and the growing awareness of environmental movements, led him to set up the *Taller de Música Mundana* [Earthly Music Workshop] (1978), joined by musicians who knew nothing about academic music and were not composers, among them Fátima Miranda (b. Salamanca, 1952).[28] The workshop participated at the Biennale of Paris in 1982, and René Farabé devoted a broadcast to them on Radio France. They disbanded in 1995 after performing their *Ópera de Papel* [Paper Opera] (1995) in the Poderwill of Berlin (Nauck 1996; López Cano 1997).

Meanwhile, in 1979, Barber created Ensems, the Festival of Contemporary Music in Valencia, whose first edition was entitled *After Cage*, and where Hidalgo's *Tamarán* (1974) was performed. The same year, he also set up FLES—*Festivales de la Libre Expresión Sonora* [Festivals for the Free Expression of Sound] (Maderuelo 1981, 53–55). With Pedro Estevan (b. Sax, 1951), Javier Maderuelo (b. Madrid, 1950), José Iges (b. Madrid, 1951), and other musicians, he founded *Elenfante*, aimed at spreading new music in opposition to the 'tyranny' of official contemporary music, represented by de Pablo and Marco (Barber and Palacios 2009, 48).[29] Barber organised the courses of the *Aula de Música* [Music Classroom] in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid from 1979 to 1984, inviting—with an introduction by Hidalgo—Takehisa Kosugi, Philip Corner, Tom Johnson, Santos, Alison Knowles, Alvin Curran, and Trevor Wishart, among others. In 1986, the Flatus Vocis Trio was founded, devoted to a personal phonetic poetry.

From reading Schafer, Mediterranean baroque minimalism, and chance—in the form of a visit to a blacksmith—, the opening up of sound began to grow into a context that led first to the creation of a portable set of bells, and then to Barber's *City Concerts* (started in 1988): and through it all, the pleasure of making sounds together and listening. After Cage and Schafer, Barber (2008–2009, 81) has established four major axes that should define the work of a musician, summarised as follows:

1. It is not enough to open the windows to allow all the sounds to come in.
2. Considering the world as a concert hall implies searching for change and for a positive silence.
3. The musician helps to build a sonorously balanced and human home.
4. The musician postulates a denial of the pleasure of the product and an affirmation of the production of the pleasure.

This affirmation of pleasure places Barber within another relationship of corporeality with respect to music that is no longer Cage's or Zaj's, based on a 'bodily intimacy' with the instruments (Charles 2005, 55). We would also add to this mix the

extravagant celebrations of the carnival, and of the *mascletá*—a thunderous crescendo of firecrackers—in his native Valencia. But this does not lead to an acceptance of sound in the Cageian sense. It is not enough to open the windows; one needs to deal ethically with the world of sound that enters through them. Barber takes this ethical necessity—which can be of course be found in Cage's ecological proposals (1981, 215–216)—from Schafer and reinvents his own procedure with all of the above.

Beyond Cage

If the previous paragraphs presented Cage's influence on experimental music in Spain as somehow liquid and difficult to grasp, in this final section we might claim that it will be more akin to air. The influence of Cage is, so to speak, in the atmosphere, but this atmosphere does not occupy a large space in the official music of this country. Although 80 years have passed since his famous *The Future of Music: Credo* (Cage 1973a, 3–6), the musical milieu still resists attempts to open up the field and often remains entrenched in structures from another era. The efforts of many music teachers have been commendable, but many of them still present Cage as someone who made perhaps funny proposals, but perpetuate the misappraisal of him as a non-musician.

Nevertheless, for many composers and performers, Cage is a figure who could contribute much, in pedagogical terms. Cage commented, in an interview, that after having studied music, it is difficult to go back to 'the direct hearing of sounds' unless you are lucky (as cited in Kostelanetz 2003, 246). Listening to sound without setting your eyes on the foreground would also be a way of making music and finding pleasure in making music. For this reason, Cage's work can be a very useful tool for musical pedagogy, as has been recognised by Mercedes Zavala and Carlos Galán (both b. Madrid, 1963). Zavala considers Cage fundamental to the pedagogical field and thinks that the academic world, composition and performance alike, has not exploited the full potential of his legacy. His inclusion in the praxis of teaching would be even more urgent among performers, due to his vision of music closely related to live performance, to the stage, to the act of making music in the present moment.[30] Galán also emphasises the fascinating ways in which Cage can help performers by placing them in a new relationship with sound and silence (as cited in Solare 2012, 2).

Cage's influence on the works of even younger musicians is more diffuse and does not follow a singular pattern, although it is worth noting that, among the most recent generation, a knowledge of Barber's work would be fundamental to approaching the essence of Cage and his work. The difficulty of doing justice to such a complex panorama of musicians inevitably means that some names will be missing. We will mention only a few examples, which I have divided into two groups, the first bridging the gap between Santos and Barber. The 'bridge generation' encompasses José Manuel Berenguer (b. Barcelona, 1955) and the aforementioned Zavala and Galán. For the second group, born in the 1970s and the 1980s, Barber is the central figure. Montserrat Palacios (b. Mexico, 1975), Isaac Diego García (b. Madrid, 1978), and Sonia Megías (b. Almansa, 1982) stand as a representative sample among them.

The 'Bridge Generation'

In the work of Berenguer and Galán, we can find the use of chance in a Cageian sense. Berenguer, as an avid reader of and regular listener to Cage's work, continually rethinks his own work, and the idea of non-directionality in particular, allowing him to take advantage of chance. This feature is especially evident in his installations such as *Canto de piedra* [Song of Stone] (2008). This work matches the three-dimensional representations of sounds with the shapes of mountains. Data used by Berenguer were obtained from the SRTM (Shuttle Radar Topography Mission) carried out by the Space Shuttle Endeavour STS-99 (February 2005) for a 3D mapping of the Earth. The evocation of Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1961) for orchestra, based on maps of the heavens, is clear (Iges and Jerez 2009; Berenguer n.d).

Moreover, Galán (1995) acknowledges Cage as a milestone for his acousmatic conception of the prepared piano, almost masking the original source in his 'material music'. In addition, he points toward Anton Webern, and Cage's *4′33″* and *0′00″*, as fruitful lessons about how to listen to silence. Moreover, *Cage-Ching, Música Matérica XXXVII*, op. 86 (2012) is dedicated to Cage: the work pays tribute to Cage's *Ryoanji* (1983–85) in that its two parts, a trombone solo and a *tutti*, may be played separately (Solare 2012, 2). The most evident influence of Cage in Zavala's work arose during her first period, characterised by the musical implications of the stage. Her first approach to Cage took place in the British musical environment. In those years (1989–93), between Spain and England, the group Sequence emerged.[31] Their work stemmed from an interdisciplinary idea very close to music theatre and performances, mixing standard and contemporary repertoire with their own. Literature, theatre, happenings, and the plastic arts were at the core of their interests.

Zavala's scenic concerns with the limits of music and concerts, the dichotomy between control and openness, and the role of the playful and even the witty, led her to compose *5 comentarios Dadá, piano performance con sexo obligato* (1991), for pianist, tap dancer, piano, handkerchief, chair, 55 coins, music stand, and 10 coloured papers, and *Diario (íntimo) de Sara-Clarabella Max, piano performance con sexo obligato* (1995), influenced by Dada, Cage, and Kagel. Toward 1995, while studying philosophy and aesthetics, she began to enquire into Zaj and Barber. Concerning Cage, she states that:

> I think that sometimes Cage has brought out my most rebellious and paradoxical side, even toward his own postures, and especially to his fanatic worshippers […] His questions, his reflections, his look have a freshness that for us is enriching […] He pushes us to be in the present world, to cut the umbilical cord with the uncritically assumed, impelling us towards new ways of conceiving what thinking and making music can be.[32]

The Cageian Synthesis Through Barber

The three musicians included in this section have participated in various editions of the Festival *Nits d'Aielo i Art*, in Valencia, directed by Barber. The voice and the performative character of music are often fundamental elements in their proposals.

The work of Montserrat Palacios combines improvisation and extended vocal techniques, and focuses on the use of objects—crystals, teapots, sewing machines, threads—in relation to the voice. Her duet for sewing machine and two singers *Coser y Cantar* [Sewing and Singing] (2009) is a tribute to her mother, who taught tailoring and dressmaking. Here, the sewing machine is her 'piano': from different pressures exerted on the pedal, it is possible to obtain different notes for defining the vocal tuning. The voice in this work is both experimental—the sound of the engine suggests extended techniques with the use of overtones, throbs, etc.—and tonal, reminiscent of some quotations, including lyrical ones that her mother liked.[33]

This unprejudiced combination of musical languages is also present in the work of Isaac Diego García. He has directed *Proyecto 23*, a group of international artists involved in sonorous and scenic experimentation from the joint practice of choral singing, also embracing early music. Their relationship with the historical avant-garde is explained in this text:

> We do not renounce the avant-gardes of history: in this wildering contemporary society, struggling to remain afloat on the waters of apathy and intellectual misery, Fluxus, Zaj, John Cage, Joan Brossa, and many others need to be relived. Our intention is not to revisit them from a historical point of view, nor indeed to repeat what has already been done or to rediscover circles which have long been completed. We welcome their influence wholeheartedly, projecting what we learn from them into the contemporary. (García 2010)

In the *Nits d'Aielo i Art*, they presented *La Miseria* [Misery] (2013), in which the eclectic character of these influences is evident. The piece is a chamber opera for voices, lute, *cuíca*, and dancer. The vocal part explores diverse languages, including mediaeval song, Mongolian diphonic singing, and phonetic poetry. The abstract narrative is articulated by the dancer, who performs classical, contemporary, Japanese butoh, and Brazilian samba. The play is a denunciation of Spanish political corruption.

Finally, Sonia Megías in her proposals keeps an attitude towards music close to that of Cage, although she acknowledges an insufficient knowledge of his work.[34] In 2014, she formed the vocal-performative duo *Dúa de Pel* with Eva Guillamón (b. Albacete, 1978), and the artists collaborated on *El Mono* [Monkey] (2011), which was a finalist at the Houston Contemporary Opera Festival. Megías has directed her vocal laboratory *Coro Delantal* [Apron Choir] since 2013 in Madrid. It has enabled her to investigate the world of unconventional notations, in which listening, performance, staging, or gesture are combined into plastic materials and not only set down on paper with ink. This passion for notation led to the creation of *Ediciones Delantal* [Apron Editions] and to working with plastic scores. In this sense, I will emphasise her tactile scores such as *Jaula de grillos* [Cage of Crickets] (2016). It is inspired by Hidalgo's *Lanas* [Wool] (1972), consisting of 100 metres of a coloured strip with bells that the performers, surrounding the audience, unravel while the piece is played (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Sonia Megías Conducting Her Coro Delantal. © Javier Valverde.

Conclusion

From that image of Cage as a cage without bars by Hidalgo, to Megías's *Cage of Crickets*, the influence of Cage on experimental Spanish music has been felt in plural and unequal ways. No particular school and no particular style have arisen; each of the protagonists has found his or her own way. For the younger generation, and the generations that will follow, we cannot guess if Cage will be, as for Higgins, the one who helps them to be conscious of what they are already doing. For these musicians, Cage is already part of the history of music.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on Contributor

Carmen Pardo Salgado is professor at the University of Girona. She was a postdoctoral researcher at the IRCAM–CNRS in Paris (1996–98). She has edited and translated the book *John Cage, Escritos al oído* (1999) and is the author of *La escucha oblicua. Una invitación a John Cage* (2001; French version as *Approche de John Cage. L'écoute oblique*, 2007, awarded the *Coup de Cœur* in 2008 from the Academy Charles Cross; in the field of contemporary music publications); *Robert Wilson* (in collaboration with Miguel Morey, 2003); *Las TICS: una reflexión filosófica* (2009); and *En el silencio de la cultura* (2016; French version as *Dans le silence de la culture*, 2018). She served as curator for the music section of the exhibition *Encuentros de Pamplona 1972: Fin de fiesta del arte experimental* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (2009–10).

Notes

[1] Having also common friends such as dancer and choreographer Bonnie Bird, social activist Dorothy Elmhirst (MacDonald 2012) and painter Marc Tobey (Cage 1973b, 186–192; Herzogenrath and Kreul 2002).

[2] For a comment upon the relationship between Zen Buddhism and Jungian psychology, see Anslow (2013, 365–374).

[3] The connection between Dada and Cage was also marked, for instance, in Cage's presentation at Donaueschingen in 1954 by Heinrich Strobel, who judged his performance as that of 'a poor Dada' (Peyser 1977, 107).

[4] Previously, in the mid-nineteenth century, some European authors focused on Eastern art and thought, for example Arthur Schopenhauer (Abelsen 1993, 255–278), Friedrich Nietzsche (Mistry 1981), or the *Japonisme* in France (Lambourne 2005). Tzara (1922) mentioned Zen Buddhism on various occasions and, although he did not develop the conceptual parallels in depth, there are points in common between Dadaism and Zen Buddhism, such as the acceptance of contradictions. This notion was generally alien to traditional Western thought. (Michael 1982, 8–12; Bahk 1997; Lochmann 2011). In contrast, Sheppard explains that Ross declared in her lecture that the comparison cannot be carried very far (2000, 266).

[5] The so-called *New York School* is represented in music during the 1950s by composers Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Christian Wolff, and John Cage. But this categorisation must be taken with caution as each one of these composers has his own aesthetic approach (Wolff in Pardo 2009, 102).

[6] The term *Españaña* was coined by Erik Satie as the title of the third part of his *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* (1913), caricaturing the fashion of an exotic Spain among the French musicians.

[7] 'I do not like the idea of influence […]. I want to let people be free, to not be disciples, influenced by me. The only influence I would accept having would be to think we shouldn't be trying to influence each other mutually' (Cage cited in Caux 2009, 44).

[8] Among those publishing Tzara's texts, we can highlight *Troços* [Fragments] founded in Barcelona by Josep Maria Junoy, which took its title from his 1916 book of the same name , Besides, *L'instant* [The Instant] was first founded in Paris by Joan Pérez i Jorba but subsequently moved to Barcelona, edited by Josep Maria Millàs-Raurell. In the rest of Spain, *Grecia. Revista de Literatura* [Greece Literature magazine], edited by Isaac del Vando-Villar and *Cervantes*, coedited by Francisco Villaespesa, Luis Gonzaga Urbino and José Ingenieros, and *Ultra*, edited by an anonymous committee, must be highlighted. These three journals were the voice of *Ultraism* in Spain, a literary movement that opposed Modernism and the Generation of '98, and collected the echoes of Dadaism, whose first Manifesto was published in *Cervantes* together with the first Ultraism Manifesto.

[9] All Spanish-language quotations in this article are given in our translation.

[10] In his piece *Zajografia* (1975) (6 photographs mounted on aluminum), Hidalgo shows his family art: photo 1. Duchamp (Rrose Sélavy), Grandfather; photo 2. John Cage, Father; photo 3. Erik Satie, Friend of the family; photo 4. Durruti, Friend of friends; photo 5. Juan Hidalgo, ZAJ; photo 6. Walter Marchetti, ZAJ. For a detailed chronology of the biography of Hidalgo and his work, see Astiárraga and Martín de Argila (1997, 307–321) and Astiárraga, Martín de Argila, and Aguilar (1997, 323–336).

[11] Previously, Hidalgo had studied in Las Palmas with Luis Prieto and Carmen Pérez (piano); in Barcelona with Frank Marshall (piano) and Xavier Montsalvatge (composition); in Madrid with Pablo Garrido, who introduced him to dodecaphony, and Gabriel Abreu (piano); in Paris with Nadia Boulanger (composition) and Pierre Lucas (piano); and in Geneva with Louis Hiltbrand (piano) and André-François Marescotti (composition), where he was awarded a second prize in instrumentation.

[12] The author concerns himself with pointillism in his work on the recipe for the *Cocktail Zaj 1965* (Hidalgo 1991, n.p.).

[13] This issue has been largely discussed by Boehmer (1997). Nevertheless, and in opposition to the postulates of the open work, indeterminacy is not a question of the work being more or less open, but of dissolving the very notion of work and working with the process. Randomness maintains the notion of the individual and therefore the function of the composer as the individual who produces the work. Unlike randomness, in indeterminacy, the elements with which one works are not known and, consequently, the composer does not maintain the position of the individual that produces the work (Bayer 1987, 178–189; Charles 2002, 25–46; Pardo 2013).

[14] The German reception of Cage was mediated by the impact of Theodor W. Adorno's philosophy. Pepper highlighted that total serialists, in the view of the German philosopher, succumbed to the fetishism of the musical material and replaced the necessary critique and historical reflection of the compositional method with a simple quantification (1997, 35). *Neue Musik* collapsed into a spatialization of the music that resulted in a stasis, what Adorno called the pseudomorphism of music on painting (1975, 174–176). Pepper's analysis must be put in parallel with the widespread opinion in Europe that American music, due to its lack of tradition, was naive and lacked the ferment of culture (*Kultur*) (Beal 2000, 105).

[15] After the Civil War, a number of Catalan musicians, such as Gerhard and Pau Casals (1876–1973), went into exile and Barcelona's musical scene became somewhat poor. Previously, from 1913 until the beginning of the Civil War, the *Associació de Música de Cambra* [Chamber Music Association] had brought to Barcelona music ranging from Ravel to Schoenberg. In April 1936, the Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and the third International Musicological Congress were both held in Barcelona, at the behest of Gerhard.

[16] Hidalgo refers here to the technique used by Cage for *Fontana Mix*. *Música en cinta* is for four sound sources and four tapes each 11 metres 40 centimetres long. The piece is open but has a time structure and the 'co-composer can choose either to leave the sound paths and encounters to chance in his version, or versions, of *Música en cinta*, or else predetermine them so that the overall structure of the piece results in the sound paths and encounters which he has specifically chosen' (Hidalgo 1997, 361). This method recalls Cage's technique in *Williams Mix* (1952).

[17] The importance of the creation of atmosphere reveals his links with what Benjamin theorised as the acquisition of a tactile quality in the artwork. According to Benjamin, Dadaism turned it into a missile. It shook the viewer, taking on a tactile quality (Benjamin 1991, XIV, 502). But unlike Benjamin, where tactility becomes a part of the perception in distraction, Zaj emphasises the seriousness and neatness of a presence that moves away from distraction. In this sense, we think that new theoretical proposals on the notion of atmosphere related to the artistic perception might make a good foundation on which to explain the making of Zaj (Thibaut 2015).

[18] Next, Zaj were with Cage in the *Pamplona Encounters* and in Italy (1972). The following year they were on tour in the United States and Canada invited by Cage. They met him again in Milan in 1977, and in 1978 in Bologna, on the occasion of *Il treno de Cage* [Cage's Train]. *Alla ricerca del silenzio perduto* with the subtitle '3 excursions in a prepared train, variations on a theme by Tito Gotti by John Cage with the assistance of Juan Hidalgo and Walter Marchetti'. Their last meeting took place in Madrid in 1991.

[19] Santos began his musical education in Vinaròs and continued at the Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu in Barcelona. He continued his studies in Paris, with Jacques Février, Robert Casadesus, Magda Tagliaferro, and Marguerite Long, among others; and with Harry Datymer

in Switzerland. He obtained the Spanish National Music Prize in 2009. Santos defies any attempt at aesthetic or ideological classification (Cureses 2006).

[20] As Pizà (2016) explains, that same year saw the adoption of new press laws and the opening of the *Museo de Arte Abstracto Español* in Cuenca by Fernando Zóbel, which attested to the fact that the artistic and cultural landscape was changing.

[21] In the words of Santos, 'Cage seemed to Brossa a typical American sailor, because of his haircut'. Additionally, Cage's homosexuality could have bothered the poet. Personal communication.

[22] Personal communication.

[23] Santos dedicated some of his works to Bach, such as the opera *La Pantera Imperial* [The Imperial Panther] (1997), or the series of photographs *Els ulls dels fills de Bach* [The Eyes of Bach's Children] (1998).

[24] Barber also received training at the Conservatory in Madrid with Cristóbal Halffter, Luis de Pablo and Carmelo Bernaola, as well as with Mauricio Kagel in Colonia in 1976. He shared readings and long conversations with Ramón Barce, too, until the latter's death. His difficult relationship with Hidalgo particularly explains his feeling of proximity and/or rejection with Zaj. For instance, in an article about Cage, he concludes by highlighting the closeness he feels to Cage's work and with the avant-garde that preceded him, although here no mention of Zaj is made (Barber 2002, 37).

[25] Personal communication.

[26] Personal communication.

[27] The first concert of Actum was scheduled for 21 December 1973, but did not take place. On December 20, ETA carried out a bomb attack that killed Admiral Carrero Blanco–Franco's Prime Minister–and the three days of official mourning, coupled with the Christmas holidays, meant the concert had to be rescheduled. It was finally held, on 10 January 1974 (Gil Noé 2015, 319).

[28] The great voice of Miranda emerged in this workshop. She then went to Paris and through Charles, she pursued her studies with Yumi Nara and began a celebrated career.

[29] The contempt of what was the official vanguard regarding the Cagean proposal and its followers is denounced by Barber to this day. He has complained about the attitude of the Spanish Ministry of Culture towards Cage and we can read between lines that also speaks of itself (Barber, 2008–2009, 70).

[30] Personal communication.

[31] Formed in 1991 by Andrew Melvin, Mercedes Zavala, Aleksey Igudesman, Alexandre Schnieper, Laureano Jesús Estepa, and Hyung-ki Joo.

[32] Personal communication.

[33] Personal communication.

[34] Personal communication.

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