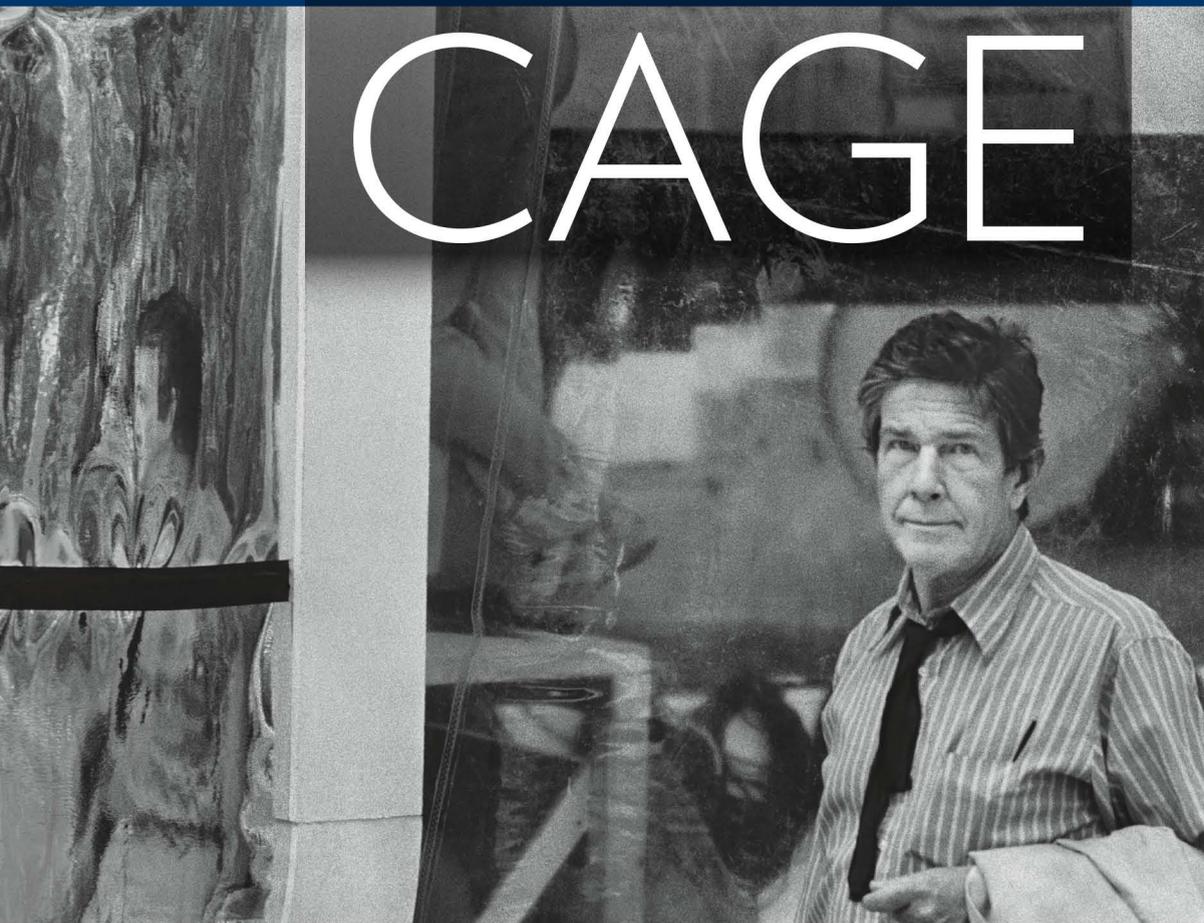


THE SELECTED LETTERS *of*

JOHN

CAGE



Edited by Laura Kuhn

THE SELECTED LETTERS of

JOHN CAGE

in one letter i said absurd things about inexpressivity; obviously wrong, but what i meant was that high expressivity often comes about through no attempt to make it or to express anything. had dinner one night with denby: i think he's a sad little man who's frightened of something. read his poetry which has some good qualities, but is by no means off this earth. i keep reading marvelous myths in joe's book, but joe, too, is not really fine fine writer. of course, this is first draft i have and he will probably improve.

send copy of finnegan book which is out now or would you rather save that for home-reading?

need you deliciously gas bill came but is nothing; do not worry about it.

prestissimo will be complex at first, then simple then complex and then faster yet to end entire piece which should be finished in two weeks, because have more things to write; i am so happy with this music that i shall be sad when it is all written each sound has gotten to be friendly and something i know and have pleasure with; they are so well trained, too.

send me some little twig or a hair from near enigma or a piece of grass you touched and gambathed with, mon prince.

today is beautiful and i am dreaming of you and enigma and how we are together today: your words in my ears making spirit soar and enigma beside and in me to make the body limp and taut by turns with delight. oh, i am sure we could use each other today

i like to believe that you are writing seems to happen the prestissimo is incredible the way you bare and is perhaps a description and song about you

banalities; afflicted with bills of all description, but do not seem to be able to be sensible about money. passed by clyde's yesterday and wanted to wrap it up and send it to you. what's wrong with their socks; they look beautiful. had, for a change, a pleasant time with schuyler; he informs me that Oliver who called the other day and wanted to know whether you could hold a tune and what kind of voice you had, with Robbins, has you in mind for the lead of their dance-musical; it doesn't mean you have to sing like galli-curci; but like american sailor perhaps, instead: i really don't know anything but, can you sing (and see stripes au meme temps?)

there is apparently a part in the book where you would go through a tunnel of love and everyone thinks you would do it very well: so do i, please go through mine, taking your time, if you will.

also schuyler had evening with virgil and v.t. now says i am ultra-genius, having seen some of 2 piano work, and that i am on a par with picasso, schoenberg, stravinsky, satie, matisse, cezanne, van gogh, etc. ad nauseum: schuyler now thinks virgil had good reasons for not reviewing other concerts, will blare next one to skies, that his review of it is really already written, that he has been making careful decisions about what to say, etc. i don't like being great. it's not good for my relation with calliope, who by the way, is not female, and looks exactly like you.

pardon the intrusion: but when in september will you be back? i would like to measure my breath in relation to the air between us.

*publication of this book is funded by the
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Number: 2 x 3/4 x 1/16
UNDER STRINGS 1 and 3
OVER STRING 2
FROM DAMPER: 5 and 7/16"

PLASTIC DISTANCE: 4 1/2"
D SHARP

BOLT (3/4 x 1 1/2 round head iron stove bolt)
BETWEEN STRINGS 2 and 3
DISTANCE FROM DAMPER: 11/16"

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BOLTS (3 x 1 1/2 round head iron stove bolts)
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RUBBER (No. 9 wire gauge flat head wood screws) INTERLACED UNDER STRING 1 and 3
DISTANCE FROM DAMPER: 14 and 1/8"

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BETWEEN STRINGS 2 and 3
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RUBBER (No. 9 wire gauge flat head wood screws) INTERLACED UNDER STRINGS 1 and 3
DISTANCE FROM DAMPER: 14 1/8"

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OVER D SHARP AND E FLAT
FROM DAMPER: 6 and 3/4"

HEAT D

THE SELECTED LETTERS *of*

JOHN CAGE

Edited by Laura Kuhn

Wesleyan University Press | Middletown, Connecticut



PART ONE

1930-1949

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of four systems of staves. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, rests, and performance markings such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings like *rit.* and *ff*. The score is written on aged paper with some ink bleed-through from the reverse side.

SCHIRMER'S IMPERIAL BRAND No. 19-20 STAVES
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IN THE SUMMER OF 1930, the adventuresome seventeen-year-old John Cage dropped out of his first year at Pomona College in California and began an eighteen-month trip abroad. Much of the time he traveled with Harvard-educated Don Sample, ten years his senior. From Algeria and elsewhere he wrote home with great enthusiasm to his parents: his father, John Milton Cage Sr., a professional inventor, and his mother, Lucretia Harvey Cage, better known as “Crete,” a journalist with the *Los Angeles Times*. His letters are brimming with excitement and wonder at the people and places he encountered. Paris awakened him to modern music, and while in Spain he did some composing.

Cage’s pursuit of a musical career began in earnest after his return to California late in 1931. Hoping to study with world-renowned Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg, who had settled in Los Angeles after fleeing Nazi Berlin, Cage began taking composition lessons with the pianist Richard Buhlig, who was much praised for his Bach interpretations and who also played contemporary works. Buhlig advised Cage to find a path to Schoenberg through one of his former students, Henry Cowell, with whom Cage then briefly studied. Cowell suggested that Cage get in touch with Adolph Weiss, the first American musician to have studied with Schoenberg. Weiss, then living in New York, agreed to take Cage on as a student, and in April 1934, Cage, with Don Sample, arrived in Manhattan. Cage took a lesson from Weiss every day and attended Cowell’s weekly class in ethnomusicology at the New School for Social Research.

In early 1935, his education well under way, Cage returned to California and began attending Schoenberg’s classes both at the master’s home and at USC and UCLA, studying musical analysis and probably also composition. For a while he also took horn lessons from a local symphonist, Wendell Hoss, but, engrossed in his work with Schoenberg, soon gave up the instrument. Cage was broke more often than not, but also willing to do whatever work came his way. He took on various odd jobs—dishwasher, recreation director for children in schools and hospitals, and, with much enjoyment, scientific researcher for his father. He also went door to door in his neighborhood, selling subscriptions,

mostly to housewives, to a lecture series on modern music and art he created ad hoc.

Cage's youthful relationship with Sample was sexual, but in the midst of his musical studies, he found himself in love with two women, and at the same time: Pauline Schindler, forty-one years old to his twenty-two and separated from her well-known architect-husband, Rudolph Schindler; and Xenia (Andreyevna) Kashevaroff, a far-from-orthodox daughter of the archpriest of the Eastern Orthodox Russian-Greek Church of Alaska. Schindler's career as a writer, editor, and lecturer on architecture and the visual arts was advanced. She was considered an agent for modernism, as photographer Edward Weston once described her, "the ideal go-between for the artist and the public." Kashevaroff, a former art student at Reed College who in time would leave her mark as a sculptor of abstract mobiles, bookbinder, and conservator, was reportedly small and feisty, possessing what Cage called a "barb wit." Weston, Xenia's erstwhile lover, described her as "most delightfully unmoral, pagan." Indeed, Weston's 1931 photographs of Xenia, some involving full frontal nudity, capture something of her wanton spirit. Cage declared his meeting with Xenia love at first sight, and the two were married in Yuma, Arizona, on June 7, 1935.

Few of Cage's letters survive between 1936 and 1938. It is known, however, that a new stage in his career began in the fall of 1938, when he joined the faculty at the adventurous Cornish School in Seattle. Within a rich academic environment that trained students in the interdependence of the arts, Cage gave courses in experimental music and modern dance composition, and served as an accompanist for modern dance classes. Having developed an intense interest in percussion music—regarding it as the perfect ground to explore the vast universe of sound—he collected and constructed percussion instruments and organized a percussion ensemble. On Dec. 9, 1938, in Seattle, he produced what may be the first concert devoted entirely to percussion music in America. Soon after, he took his musicians to perform at schools around the Northwest, touring as the Cage Percussion Players, sometimes with Bonnie Bird and her Cornish School dancers.

Cage's letters resume in 1939, and for three summers he taught in the Dance Department of Mills College in Oakland, California. He also entered into what would be enduring relationships with others in his chosen field. The first summer, 1939, he offered a class in percussion jointly with a fellow student of Henry Cowell's, Lou Harrison. Brought together by Cowell, Harrison and Cage partnered to compose *Double Music* (1941), working separately without consultation and then putting their parts together. It was also at Mills College that Cage first

met the composer and music critic Virgil Thomson, with whom he entered into an equally long if more troubled relationship.

Cage's music began to be noticed; his 1940 concert at Mills College, with seventeen percussionists, yielded enthusiastic notices in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Time* magazine. His reach was also widening, and he gained an important champion in Peter Yates, a music critic and writer for the magazine *Arts & Architecture*. Yates, with his wife, Frances, held concerts featuring avant-garde compositions on the roof of their Los Angeles home, aptly publicized as Evenings on the Roof. Yates explained and supported Cage's radically new ideas in many published articles, and the two forged a close, important friendship.

Cage's various musical pursuits came together in his desire to establish a Center for Experimental Music. He worked hard to gather funds and to persuade a variety of institutions to sponsor it, but his overtures were either turned down or ignored. Among those to whom he proposed the center was the émigré painter/photographer László Moholy-Nagy. Formerly an influential teacher at the Bauhaus in Germany, Moholy-Nagy had established a sort of American Bauhaus in Chicago, the School of Design. Accepting an invitation to teach there, the Cages moved to Chicago in the fall of 1941. In addition to delivering his course Sound Experiments at the School of Design, Cage taught and performed elsewhere in and around Chicago, a city not much to his liking. He and Xenia befriended Rue Shaw, president of the distinguished Arts Club of Chicago, where Cage would give an explosive percussion concert in early 1942 involving tin cans, a siren, and shattered bottles that received national attention.

Late in 1941, Cage was commissioned by Columbia Workshop of WBBM and Columbia Broadcasting System to compose a radio play with sound effects on a text by the poet Kenneth Patchen, also resident in Chicago. Poet and composer together created *The City Wears a Slouch Hat*, which was given its one and only live broadcast over the CBS network on May 31, 1942, a Sunday afternoon. The public response from across the nation was a lively jumble of boos and hurrahs. Emboldened by the experience, Cage and Xenia moved to New York City in the summer of 1942. They lodged for a few weeks at Peggy Guggenheim's "Hale House," then in Montclair, New Jersey, with Cage's parents, who themselves had moved east. He gave his first New York concert at the Museum of Modern Art in association with the League of Composers that was covered extensively in the press, including a pictorial spread in *Life* (March 15, 1943). And although Cage's letter dated January 11, 1945, requesting exemption via a III-A classification from the draft hasn't survived, we know that he avoided military service on the basis of Xenia's (slightly exaggerated) poor health, as was reported to the

Selective Service System (Local Board No. 219, Los Angeles, California) by one Ernest W. Kulka, M.D.

Gradually, Cage was turning away from composing percussion music to writing exclusively for the piano, both prepared and unprepared. Cage had long-standing interest in experimental instruments, as his many references to such composers and inventors as Luigi Russolo, Léon Theremin, and Edgard Varèse attest. His own prepared piano would bring him national attention. Inspired by Cowell's earlier unorthodox experiments, Cage had devised his new instrument while at the Cornish School, bringing forth unusual timbres from the piano by inserting various objects (rubber washers, screws, bolts, weather stripping) between its strings. Chief among his compositions for the instrument would be his *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946–1948); the pianist Maro Ajemian, a devotee of contemporary music, would give the first partial performance of the work on April 16, 1946, at New York's Town Hall, which was enthusiastically reviewed in the *New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, and elsewhere. As Cage worked to complete the piece, which was ultimately dedicated to Ajemian, his friend Lou Harrison, who had also moved East, suffered a nervous breakdown. To help defray the cost of Harrison's treatment in a New York sanatorium, Cage sought and secured assistance from a composer whose music Harrison advocated passionately, Charles Ives.

Cage's letters from the early 1940s tell us much about the onset of his relationship with Merce Cunningham. The two had met in 1938 at the Cornish School, where Cunningham, then nineteen years old to Cage's twenty-six, was enrolled as a theater student but taking a class in modern dance which Cage sometimes served as accompanist. The two reconnected while the Cages were in Chicago, but their friendship didn't blossom until both were resident in New York where Cunningham had earlier moved to join the Martha Graham Dance Company. Cunningham began making dances to music by Cage, and, ever more intrigued by each other's ideas and work, the two soon became lovers. Cage's letters reveal a stormy start to the relationship, he being by turns ecstatic and bereft. In either case, his work was clearly enlivened by the close proximity of a genuine and promising colleague. Unable to tolerate her husband's diversion, Xenia left Cage in 1944; despite attempts to reconcile, they divorced in 1946.

Artistically, Cage's union with Cunningham was an immediate success. Their first recital together, in April 1944, included six prepared piano pieces by Cage with solo dances by Cunningham. The reviews were glowing. Among other acclaimed early collaborations was their May 1947 performance of *The Seasons* at Broadway's Ziegfeld Theater, with scenery and costumes by Isamu Noguchi.

Throughout these years Cage undertook much else. He considered composing a dance score for Edgar Allan Poe's "The Bells," an idea proposed in 1945 by the dancer/choreographer Ruth Page and her husband, Thomas Hart Fisher. In the fall of 1946, Cage met in New York the visiting Indian musician Gita Sarabhai. The two became good friends and met several times a week over five months, exchanging ideas about Indian music and philosophy and the teachings of Arnold Schoenberg that would resonate in Cage's life and work for decades. Cage also wrote and published articles about contemporary music, including his own, and in the winter of 1947 founded a short-lived art and literary magazine, *Possibilities*, with the artist Robert Motherwell.

In the summer of 1948, Cage and Cunningham were in residence at Black Mountain College, near Asheville, North Carolina. The director of the small, experimental school was Josef Albers, a German-born artist who had taught in the Bauhaus but fled Nazi Germany and joined the Black Mountain faculty. While Cage's letters provide little detail, it is known that during his two visits with Cunningham, in 1948 and again in 1952, Cage played his complete *Sonatas and Interludes* for the first time in public and offered courses, including *Structure of Music* and *Music for Dance*. He also produced a festival devoted to the works of Erik Satie, which included an original staging of Satie's Dada comedy *The Ruse of Medusa*, starring R. Buckminster Fuller as the Baron Medusa, Elaine de Kooning as his daughter Frisette, and Cunningham as Jonas, a costly mechanical monkey. Cage was enamored with Satie, and revealed his ever-widening knowledge about the French composer when writing about his works to both Yates (in 1948) and Cecil Smith (in 1950), a writer for *Musical America*.

Cage's correspondence becomes unusually rich after March 23, 1949, when he and Cunningham sailed for Europe. His many letters to friends and family record a lively social, intellectual, and artistic life abroad. Cage visited Giacometti and Brancusi, played for one of Olivier Messiaen's classes, and at least twice visited Alice B. Toklas. He delighted in knowing Maggie Nogueira, a generous Brazilian woman who provided dinner and theater invitations in Amsterdam as well as the use of her chauffeured car. Nogueira was closely connected to another of Cage's confidantes of the period, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, an Australian composer and music critic who had acquired American citizenship and lived in New York.

Many of Cage's friends visited him in Paris, including the composer Merton Brown and the painter Jack Heliker. Gita Sarabhai also arrived, now married and known as Gita Mayer, as did Maro Ajemian (to perform Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*), with her mother in tow; Cage recounts in a letter to his parents

dated August 27, 1949, having to assist the Ajemians with all manner of logistics, which was not always appreciated. Amid seemingly constant socializing—including a visit to the home of one of the Baronesses Rothschild—Cage managed to conduct an exhaustive search for compositions by Satie, acquiring published scores and unpublished facsimiles for his own collection and that of Virgil Thomson. Ever stylish, he also managed to have new suits made while in Italy, which, he told his parents, were sorely needed.

While Cage was forging friendships with cutting-edge composers throughout Europe, the center of his musical and social life in Paris was a former student of Messiaen's, twenty-four-year old Pierre Boulez. Cage considered Boulez's music the best he heard in Europe, and the two became fast friends. Boulez introduced Cage around Paris and arranged for him to give numerous private concerts. Cage in turn took Boulez, with Cunningham, on a visit to Toklas and introduced him to Aaron Copland, a former student of the legendary French pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, who was then in Paris.

Toward the end of his travels in late 1949, and despite what he called his "wild, marvelous life" abroad, Cage began longing to return to America. He had experienced and come to disdain Europe's commitment to the past, and his financial problems had become chronic. While in Paris he learned that he had been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, but he postponed using it until he returned home. He also missed the loft he had recently decorated and rented during his absence to someone who, he was told, mistreated it. Set in lower Manhattan, the large, new place had a view of the Statue of Liberty.

To the Cage Family

[Undated, ca. 1930] | Biskra, Algeria

DEAR DENVER CAGES AND THE OTHER OUTLYING CAGES:

You found it slightly queer to be writing to me in Paris, but you might have thought it still more unusual to be writing a letter to Biskra, Algeria. My letters from America now go through the most fascinating operations in post offices in three or four countries. They finally find me in some town in Northern Africa with all sorts of different color stamps on them, and I have to pay a penny or so of added postage to be given the privilege of receiving them. Sometimes I just sit down and marvel, amazed, at the envelopes so exotically decorated. They often have stamps on them as beautiful and strange as the one that I shall put on this letter. I wish that you could be in my place and receive letters that had been forwarded from France to Italy and different islands in the Mediterranean and different countries in Northern Africa.

I have been traveling with a chap I found in Capri.¹ He comes from Pittsburgh and from Harvard College and a number of other places. He writes poetry which he refuses to have printed. And he likes to visit Europe and Africa in the same manner that I do. That is: We avoid with care the carefully swept tourist roads and we crawl into the natural, average places of the countries. I am interested especially in the people of the cities, all the people. Don is interested most in the country, the hills, lakes, etc. He feels at home at present on a sand dune, riding a camel. I am perfectly happy in a cafe watching the Arabs play dominoes and drink coffee. Or in a post office watching the Arabs send letters or receive money or find witnesses who will identify them if they don't know how to sign their own names. Vesuvius I saw from a distance. I found Etna far more beautiful, covered with clouds and snow, and not with funiculars sliding up and down it. The best part of Naples was its fish market, which was positively thrilling. The fish were kept brilliant and striking by having water dashed on them every now and then, as though they were clothes which were being dampened before being ironed. And there were all manner of fishes. There were even baby octopuses, which people would come and inspect and approve and buy. I didn't buy any fish. All of Naples is dirty and happy. People working sing. People sleeping in the sun in December. Across to Capri. It takes an hour and a half on the boat that goes twice a day. Over on Capri there are

1. Don Sample, American poet and artist, with whom Cage cohabitated for a time in Los Angeles after his sojourn in Europe.

flowers and bells and paths in the sunlight and walks down to the sand and little boats that you go paddling in, but if you go in these little “sandalinós” you have to wear only short bathing pants, because the “sandolino” is liable to turn over and land you completely in the bay of Naples, or, at any rate, by the mere act of paddling, water will get into the boat. You can go for an hour or two, however, before you sink.

It was very kind of you to send me the money, and kinder of you to write the letters to me. I am always more than happy to hear from you. Please pardon my using my typewriter. But I have such trouble getting it through customs and such things that I feel the necessity to make use of it. I have wanted to send gifts from Europe at Christmas time, but the difficulties of taxes, etc. are apparently great. You will have to wait. My English as you see is getting horrid; I hope it remains slightly understandable. French is used more than English in Africa and I’m getting into bad habits of language.

[*handwritten note in left margin*] Please write to Poste Restante Seville Spain and say “Hold” on the envelope.

To Adolph Weiss²

[*Spring 1933?*] | Carmel, California

Dear Mr. Weiss,

The enclosed compositions (*Sonata for One Voice; Sonata for Two Voices; Composition for Three Voices*) I beg you to consider merely as work which I have finished in the last half-year. I have, in writing them, erected arbitrary rules which have been strictly observed; so that, in defending them, I would be able to analyse all of the relationships which, in writing, I set up.

Richard Buhlig,³ in Los Angeles, is very much interested in my work, and advised me to get in touch with Henry Cowell.⁴ When, recently, I saw Mr. Cow-

2. Adolph Weiss (1891–1971), American composer and bassoonist, the first American musician to study with Arnold Schoenberg. He became Cage’s first composition teacher.

3. American pianist Richard (Moritz) Buhlig (1880–1952) gave the first American performance of Schoenberg’s op. 11. He championed such European modernists as Ferruccio Busoni and Béla Bartók, and such American composers as Ruth Crawford and Henry Cowell.

4. Henry Cowell (1897–1965), experimental American composer, music theorist, pianist, and publisher, one of Cage’s closest colleagues. The rhythmic and harmonic concepts in his *New Musical Resources* (1930) exerted profound influence on experimental composers. He was married to the American ethnographer Sidney (Robertson) Cowell (1903–1995).

ell, I told him of my intention to study with Dr. Schoenberg⁵ and asked him what method to pursue in order to accomplish that intention, by means of a scholarship. Mr. Cowell was rather vague, but definitely stated that you prepare students for Dr. Schoenberg, and advised me to send my compositions to you.

I am writing, then, to ask if you will teach me. And, are there any possibilities of obtaining a scholarship, for I have no money?

I am not ignorant that I will have to work hard; I add this because of the stories I have heard of the disappointments of “modernists” who have wanted to study with Schoenberg, hoping to find in him someone who would “sympathize.”

Of course, I am very anxious to receive a reply from you, as soon as it would be convenient for you to send me one.

References: Richard Buhlig
102 S. Carondolet
Los Angeles, California

Henry Cowell
Menlo Park, California

P.S. I am twenty-one years old, and have worked for the last three years without a teacher.

J.C.
Box 1111, Carmel, Calif

To Henry Cowell

October 26, 1933 | 803 Griffith Park Blvd. Los Angeles

Dear Mr. Cowell,

I am writing in order to let you know that I have moved from the Santa Monica address which I gave you in connection with the *Sonata for B-flat Clarinet Alone* which I sent you for publication in *New Music* at Mr. Buhlig’s request. I am, of course, very interested in receiving your criticism.

5. Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), Austrian composer, music theorist, and teacher, leader of the Second Viennese School, who numbered among his European students Alban Berg and Anton Webern, and among his American students Lou Harrison and John Cage. Schoenberg developed the twelve-tone technique, which became a widely influential compositional method making use of an ordered series of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. His name is strongly associated with dodecaphony. Among his writings is *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (1957). See Cage’s letter to Adolph Weiss dated [May 1935] for an account of their first meeting, page 20.

I am, at present, in extremely straight circumstances. I feel that you must be interested in the economic problems of the composer. If you know of any solution that would give me leisure to study and write, I would be very grateful if you would let me know of it.

I am writing now a *Sonata for Two Voices* and have finished the first movement. In it I treat each sound as absolutely individual; two different A's, for example, are absolutely different. It is a way of writing which I have approached with difficulty and yet inevitably. The last movement of the *Clarinet Sonata* which I sent you is obviously not written from this, my present point of departure. There I have, in writing a crab-canon, exchanged at will one A for another, desiring a change in flow-character.

I have no piano now. But that doesn't bother me much. What I want is time.

To Pauline Schindler⁶

11 December 1934 | Location not indicated

Dearest Pauline:⁷

I am terribly excited at the prospect of seeing you soon again and I want you to know I am extremely worried that you won't or will get the flavor of N.Y. via me. I am in a rush of vortex!!! and you must pardon if this arrives to be only a note. Will travel by Santa Fe where Cowell + I are invited for Xmas Holiday. I forget the names of the people. How soon will I see you. You are probably in Ojai + I will (probably) have to stay in L.A. for a dutiful period which I will enjoy however. I will meet Schoenberg (whom you have already) by taking him presents from Mrs. Weiss who is not coming. How is Mark.⁸ Give him my best + Pat.⁹

6. (Sophie) Pauline (Gibling) Schindler (1893–1977), American writer, editor, and lecturer who specialized in architecture and the visual arts. During her marriage to the Austrian-born American architect Rudolph Schindler (1887–1953), she hosted salons at their Kings Road House in Los Angeles, which were attended by Southern California's artistically minded, leftist intelligentsia. She was at the helm of two central California publications—*The Carmelite* (Carmel) and *Dune Forum* (Oceano Dunes)—and frequently reviewed local cultural events. Cage's article "Counterpoint" first appeared in *Dune Forum* 1, no. 2 (Feb. 15, 1934). Schindler is the dedicatee of Cage's *Composition for Three Voices* (1934), a chromatic work that maintains extreme distances between the repetitions of individual tones of the twenty-five tone ranges of the instruments.

7. A total of twenty-eight letters between Cage and Schindler survive, all written while Schindler was based in Ojai and separated from her husband. See Maureen Mary, ed., "Letters: The Brief Love of John Cage for Pauline Schindler, 1934–35," *ex tempore* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1996).

8. Mark Schindler, Pauline's twelve-year-old son.

9. Pat O'Hara, Pauline's lover, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

And Buhlig! I can't wait. And everybody. There are two more important people in L.A. whom I think you don't know. Joseph Achron, Jew + Wm. Grant Still,¹⁰ negro (composers). These distinctions are important now. Everything is important. Equalities. Distinctions wiping them out + emphasizing them.

To Adolph Weiss

[*Winter, 1934?*] | *Location not indicated*

Dear Mr. Weiss:

Please write to me and let me know what your plans are. This is an S.O.S. I count almost entirely on working with you.

I am to be married soon. In May, as far as I know. Xenia is now in Alaska.¹¹ We will want to live near you and Mrs. Weiss.

Please let me know where you will be. Otherwise I will feel that you have cast me aside, which I can't believe.

I think I am progressing with the horn. My tongue, though, is very sluggish. And people begin to object to my practicing.

And now I reach a point where my respect and affection for you and Mrs. Weiss pass bounds, and I am afraid of seeming not sincere, but believe in my deep respect and friendship.

To Herr Jawlinski¹²

[*ca. 1935*] | *1207 Miramar, Los Angeles*

Herr Jawlinski

Ich kann nicht Deutsch schreiben oder sprechen, aber ich bin sehr freudig, weil ich habe eines Ihnen Bilder gekauft. Jetzt ist es in mir.

Ich schreibe Musik. Sie sind mein Lehrer.

10. Joseph Achron (1886–1943) and William Grant Still (1895–1978), American composers active in Los Angeles in the 1930s who championed the use of ethnic elements in composition.

11. Xenia (Andreyevna) Kashevaroff (1913–1995), daughter of the archpriest of the Eastern Orthodox Russian-Greek Church of Alaska, a former art student at Reed College.

12. Properly, Alexej Georgewitsch von Jawlensky (1864–1941), Russian expressionist painter, a key member of the New Munich Artist's Association, The Blue Rider, and, later, The Blue Four, championed by Galka Scheyer (see note 28). The letter reads:

Ich will mehr schreiben aber ich kann nicht geben auf Deutsch alles was ich will.

Es war #116

To Mrs. Adolph Weiss

January 3, 1935 | 1207 Miramar, Los Angeles

My dear Mrs. Weiss:

I wish that you were here enjoying the very beautiful weather that we are having. The hills are all intensely green, and from my window I awake to look at snow-capped mountains. The air is very gentle and the sunlight is brilliant and warm. I hope that you are not angry with me for telling you about these things, because I don't mean to be boasting of them; I only wish that you were enjoying them.

It has taken me a few days to get back into the swing of working, but I'm there now and enjoying writing exercises and working on my song. Mother says that I may buy a flute, but I am going to wait until Mr. Weiss arrives; he may have something to say about what kind, etc.

Mr. Buhlig is giving several concerts which I'm going to hear. A modern one with Copland, Scriabin, Busoni, Schoenberg, Chavez and Bartok; then a Bach program (two toccatas and the *Goldberg Variations*); three Beethoven Sonatas, 106, 110, 111, I think; and the last will be the *Art of the Fugue*. He is much better, and says, in fact, that he hasn't felt better in at least ten years.

Don is staying with relatives in San Fernando, California. Henry left a few days ago for Menlo Park. We had an excellent trip across country. I was sorry that Don changed his mind about Santa Fe.

I am wishing with all my heart that this letter finds you well and not too burdened with the illness in Mr. Weiss' family. And that the coming year will be an excellent one for you and Mr. Weiss.

I cannot write in German or speak German, but I am very happy because I bought one of your paintings.

Now I have it.

I write music. You are my teacher.

I would like to write more, but I cannot express all the things I want to say in German.

It was number 116.

Did you know that Bertha Knisely,¹³ the music critic who mentioned the Santa Barbara idea to Mr. Weiss, has given up her position and eloped with a painter to Spain?

Mother's being on the newspaper makes it possible for her to get tickets for anything she wants to go to,¹⁴ so that I will be able to attend any concerts there are that I want to. I am going to go to the Philharmonic whether I like the programs or not, because I think it is very necessary to hear as much music as I can.

I am also enjoying the records Henry gave me. We have a phonograph, not a very good one, but it goes around. I find Mr. Weiss's songs more and more beautiful.¹⁵

I know that you are probably very busy, but I should like to hear from you.

I have not tried to get in touch with the Schoenbergs but shall wait, as you asked me to, until Mr. Weiss arrives, unless, he is, by accident, at one of the concerts in Buhlig's home.

To Pauline Schindler

January 11, 1935 | Los Angeles

Dearest Pauline:

Your letter came—your parenthesis—and I love it because I shall steer clear of all directions except a bee-line for you.

Life has been hectic and the sky beautifully cloud-filled, sunlight and then beautiful shower-baths. Palm-trees and acacias in bloom and all sorts of things I took for granted for too long. I feel bristling with spontaneity: I love you.

At last I heard some of the *Kunst der Fuge*. What can I say but that listening receives one into a new broad heaven, awakening and including, I feel where you have been. Nothing I have ever heard is at all similar. Oh, for a blindness to all else!

13. Bertha McCord Knisely, music critic for the Los Angeles weekly *Saturday Night* and a supporter of the composer Harry Partch (see note 339).

14. Lucretia Cage (née Harvey; 1885–1968), whose first piece for the *Los Angeles Times*, under the by-line Crete Cage, appeared on October 2, 1934. When her husband's job for the U.S. Army necessitated a move to New Jersey, she resigned, her last piece appearing on February 14, 1939.

15. Likely three of Weiss's 7 *Songs* (to texts by Emily Dickinson): 2. *Cemetery*, 3. *The Railway Train*, and 5. *Mysteries*, performed by Mary Bell, soprano, and the New World String Quartet. They were released on the New Music Quarterly Recordings label, an adjunct operation to Cowell's *New Music Quarterly* publication, in 1934.

Buhlig is giving three recitals in his home Sundays: Jan. 20, 27 and Feb. 3. Beethoven, Bach, Modern (respectively). Subscriptions \$2.50 or single admission \$1.00. 8:30 p.m. He wanted me to tell you so that if people in Ojai coming down were interested they would know about it through you if you knew and told them. That keeps me from taking Weiss to Santa B. but I am coming to see you next week. The car has become a problem and I lose all spontaneity about asking for it, because it has to do with mother who needs it in her work.

I have been phoning people right and left and finally we have the returns of the concerts definitely up to \$137.50. The idea was Calista's in order to pay Buhlig's railway fare.¹⁶ We won't stop till we get to \$240. It is exciting and I enjoy it because it is for Buhlig.

It is, of course, conclusively shown that I know nothing about modulation, but so much the better, because then I can go on working till I do. I hope very much that my work is not so bad that Weiss will give me up as a bad job.

I met Schoenberg and he is simplicity and genuineness itself. There was analysis of the Dance Suite hanging up on the wall like a mural.

Did I tell you that I met another teacher-to-be of mine tonight: Wendell Hoss,¹⁷ a friend of Weiss, who will teach me to play the French horn. I think it will be better than the flute. And I will stop smoking and join an orchestra.

I feel all the friction you have in reading this letter. What is an orchestra, you ask, or a French horn, or harmony, or collecting money for tickets? Nothing at all but a series of essential farces. Do they touch you? I think not.

To Pauline Schindler

January 18, 1935 | *Location not indicated*

Dearest,

There was a little open space the other day: I was walking and thinking of you in Ojai, an open space of country, and suddenly I knew what wildness was. I hissed and grunted and felt myself expanding with a big heart 'til for a moment I was out of my mind and only tremendously alive.

I did not know you were wild and intoxicating. And now I have only very

16. Calista Rogers, a favorite singer among such Southern California composers as William Grant Still and Harry Partch.

17. Wendell Hoss (1892–1980), founder of the Los Angeles Horn Club and the International Horn Society, best known for his excellent transcription of the Bach *Cello Suites*.

present memories. Life has been short, has only begun. And I can see in the corner your eyes, never turned away. And your hair is some kind of a promise, I don't know of what, perhaps that it will reach your shoulders and that I may bury myself in it.

Perhaps I am satisfied that you, whom I know are a fragment, you are entirely another's. And yet, these days you are always with me.

It is late and I am tired and I love you and want to be with you.

I am sure there is something unexplainably and mysteriously sacred about the Valley, something including evil.

To Henry Cowell

[ca. 1935] | *Location not indicated*

Dear Henry,

Your card and you are too good to me. I cannot describe how much I feel towards you of warmth and love. I can feel myself losing all definition in sentimentality.

I have since writing to you before heard from Adolph and am in touch with him. I will be with him again as soon as he is settled.

I have a job now in scientific research which gives me \$25.00 a week and takes my afternoons.¹⁸ It is very interesting work. I enjoy it. I have my horn lessons to pay for and a horn to buy.

I will also have a little money to begin operations and I shall begin more immediately the work for the Society.¹⁹ I am anxious to see Schönberg and get what cooperation he will give. Pro Musica is giving his *III Quartett* (Abas Quartett).²⁰ Oh, Henry, my intentions are the best. I use all the time, there never is enough. I accomplish very little.

18. Cage refers to intermittent work for his inventor father, John Milton Cage Sr. (1886–1964), whose projects over the years ranged from submarines and internal combustion engines to radio (a crystal set that could be plugged into an ordinary electric light system) and an “Invisible Ray Vision System” (for seeing in the dark).

19. Cowell's New Music Society advocated the work of contemporary composers across the Americas. Beginning in 1927, Cowell began publishing scores by young composers in his *New Music Quarterly*.

20. Cage refers to Pro Musica, a concert series that presented Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 3*, op. 30, performed by the Abas Quartet.

I will send you exercises soon and also will send you my subscription to the music and records.

I want to be married soon. I don't know why I tell you but it's very important to me.

To Pauline Schindler

February 22, 1935 | Los Angeles

Dearest Pauline:

STRAVINSKI! . . . The evening was pure joy—and I think that this music is natural. There are no “ideas” in it. It is, you know it, pagan, physical. It is seeing life close and loving it so. There are no whirring magical mystifications. It is all clear and precisely a dance. It is not “frozen architecture.”

I heard one person say afterward: “Henceforth I shall not take music seriously but shall enjoy it twice as much.” I was furious and turned to him and said, Take it twice as seriously and enjoy it four times as much!

Throughout the “Eight Pieces” the audience had an ostinato of ecstatic laughter. And irrepressible applause, which was not in the least unacceptable.

I spoke with Kurt Reher afterwards, a fine cellist in the orchestra. He brought me back to the “Germans.” He said, It's nothing but *The Firebird*. That is real.

The Firebird, yes, and I had forgotten that it existed. It is the beautiful born from the evil. It is as though one decided to have wings and fly, and nothing else had power but that. Infernal demands are nothing to deter.

This is now music which we have and which is accepted, which does not provoke anger, hysteria or any vulgar objection. And it is a static music which is itself and which does not prophecy or go forward in an adventure. It is not a speculation. It is the worship of the Golden Calf. Moses and God are far away. And we say yes to cutting them off!

I love you. Oh that I were with you.

To Adolph Weiss

[March 30, 1935?] | Location not indicated

Dear Mr. Weiss:

You are probably now not touring any longer. Do you have definite plans for the future? I want very much to fit into them, if I may.

It seems to me like a maelstrom, here in Los Angeles. I am kept very busy, so that there is no rest. I have work for you to see. And I am anxious to go forward. The horn I love. I enjoy studying with Mr. Hoss very much. I fear that I am very slow but I am sure that he is teaching me excellently. It is the flexibility of the instrument that pleases me most.

Schoenberg is giving a class in analysis, the fee for which is quite small; and since I have a job now in scientific research for a company my father has started, I am able to attend this class. We are analyzing the *4th Symphony* of Brahms, the *Art of the Fugue*, some of the *Well-Tempered Clavichord*, and the *III String Quartet* of Schoenberg. Although I am not really prepared for this class, I manage to keep my ears open and absorb what I can. There are about 40 people in the class, mostly teachers of music.

A great deal of Schoenberg's music has recently been played: the *Verklaerte Nacht*, the *III String Quartet* (several times) and songs from the *Book of the Hanging Gardens*, also op. II. A large reception was given him by the Mailamm Society,²¹ a Jewish organization, last night. And it was a very sincere ovation. He gave a racial talk. He is beginning to be very much loved. His conducting, however, was mercilessly criticized. People found his tempos dull and uninteresting.

I would be able to send you some money now, since I have a job. I don't know how long I will have it. But whatever I have is yours.

Henry has asked me to arrange a concert for him here of Japanese Shaku-hachi playing by a friend of his, K. Tamada;²² I am doing this.

I feel isolated and cut-off, not having heard from you. I want very much to be with you again.

21. Formed in 1931 by a group of Jewish musicians and scholars in New York City and formally known as the America-Palestine Music Association of Musical Sciences. The organization became known as Mailamm, the Hebrew version (in an acronym) of its English title.

22. Kitaro Nyokyo Tamada reportedly ran a roadside fruit stand in Cowell's Los Angeles neighborhood. Discovering that Tamada played the shakuhachi, Cowell took up the instrument and composed *The Universal Flute*, which he dedicated to his new friend. Cowell organized concerts by local Japanese-American performers, many of whom would be interned during the war years. Cage organized a concert for Tamada at Cowell's home on April 13, 1935.

Please give my best regards to Mrs. Weiss. How is everyone? And believe me always,

Your devoted pupil

To Adolph Weiss

[May 1935] | *Location not indicated*

My dear Mr. Weiss:

Perhaps you are wondering why I have not answered your letter. I have certainly wanted to. But, following the suggestion you gave in your letter immediately before, I did my best to get “closer” to Schoenberg. He had, in between your two letters, asked me to come and see him. After making an appointment with him, I decided, since you considered it best, to ask him point blank if I might in my way continue my studies with him. He asked me many questions, —about my work with you and before studying with you. My answers showed him how very little I know, —particularly with regard to the literature of string quartets, symphonies, etc. He finally decided, however, to accept me in a class in counterpoint which had already started, suggesting that, with the aid of a George Tremblay,²³ who is studying composition with him, I might “make up” what I had missed. He felt that what I already know of harmony, through you, would be sufficient for the time being. His last words on this first occasion were: Now you must think of nothing but music: and must work from six to eight hours a day.

The result is that I work all the time. I am proud to say that I am already doing work which surpasses that of the two other pupils. This is merely because I examine the possibilities as completely as I can. It is amazing what can be done with a single cantus firmus. When I write harmony exercises again, they will, I hope, be much better than before. We have had, so far, four lessons with Schoenberg: 3-part counterpoint, first species, second species (a) with one moving voice and (b) with two moving voices, and third species (syncopation —which, by the way, is fourth species in most textbooks) with one voice only in syncopes. And with Tremblay I have completed the five species of 2-part writing, and am now working on mixed species.

23. George Tremblay (1911–1982), Canadian-born American composer ardently devoted to Arnold Schoenberg and the twelve-tone method of composition.

Xenia is staying until the end of this month (May) in Alaska; it is her father's wish. He is quite elderly and does not expect to see her again.²⁴

Mother tells me that the secret of her vitality is in not drinking and not smoking. The funny thing is that she does drink. I am the one who has decided not to drink. I decided that I am "drunk" all of the time, and that to add to it is not intelligent. Of course, since making this decision I drank a glass of beer, because I was thirsty, a second glass of beer, because I was eating some corned beef and cabbage and knew that beer would be just the thing. Another time I drank some blackberry wine because it tastes so good.

But Mother's vitality is certainly amazing. For example: after spending a strenuous week in Del Monte, California (where a club convention recently took place), she returned home and worked the next night until five in the morning, slept three hours until eight, went to the office and stayed until six, and after all of that was looking as fresh and "raring to go" as a pampered racehorse. Perhaps she wouldn't appreciate the analogy.

I was very much interested in your remarks about the violin sonata which you had just completed. I should like very much to see it. I would also like to have a copy of your piano sonata. How much would that cost? Couldn't a copy be printed from that black and white one you have? If so, I would get someone here to work on it, with your permission. Also, could the songs be obtained in a similar manner? Please let me know about these things. We have, for instance, Calista Rogers who sings, very well, modern songs. She sings several songs from Schoenberg's *Book of the Hanging Gardens*. We have an excellent string quartet, the Abas String Quartet; and they would certainly be willing to work on either the songs or a quartet. I know them all. They are the ones who performed Schoenberg's 3rd S[tring]Q[uartet]. Schoenberg's *Suite in Old Style* was played by the orchestra under Klemperer last week. It is very beautiful and does not sound "old" at all,—which, of course, it isn't.

We are having now such beautiful weather that my inclination is to do nothing at all. If I were not so busy, I should just go outdoors and live like an animal. I shall be moving as soon as Xenia comes and we shall live where there is sunlight. At present I use electricity during the day just as though I were in New York.

24. The Reverend Andrew Petrovich Kashevaroff (1863–1940), longtime pastor of the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Juneau. He was married to Martha Bolshanin of Sitka, with whom he had six children. From 1920 he also served as curator of the Alaska State Library and Museum and wrote many articles on Alaska's history and ethnology.

Which reminds me that Schoenberg's plans, at present, are, as far as I know, indefinite. Perhaps New York next fall.

Then I should have the great pleasure of seeing you soon again. Perhaps Xenia + I would come to Chatauqua. I hope she plays bridge. We could all play bridge together.

My father's work is coming excellently. Both he and Mother often speak of you.

I shall write soon again because this is an incomplete letter and doesn't have any "ruminations" in it.

P.S. Very best regards to Mrs. Weiss. I get very lonely not seeing you both.

To Pauline Schindler

May 24, 1935 | Los Angeles

Pauline, dearest,

I love you always; it was in many ways puzzling to me that although you were in Los Angeles, we didn't see each other. I have not before now had the time, literally, to write; so that you may infer that you were right, if you stayed away because of some feeling that I was "too occupied." Buhlig said you said something of the sort. I had dinner with him the evening following your dinner; and it seemed strangely unnatural that we shouldn't have been together.

Possibly I have not told you that Schoenberg teaches me counterpoint now. And I am very happy because my work seems to please him. Today he turned to the two other pupils and said: You see, I don't even have to look at it (my exercises), I know they're right. He is a teacher of great kindness and understanding and it is a rich comfort that he gives.

His recent *Suite in Old Style* was played Saturday and is a marvel. There is nothing old about it. Although it begins with an Overture (Prelude and Fugue) the whole "idea" is basically a new concept of Fugue. There are, i.e., no two relationships of subject and answer identical. His feeling for the variation of idea did not allow of the opposite nor of another "old" idea—that of vagueness. So that the episodes (which are usually built of the latter) are here the development of the prelude. It is fascinating because the prelude is *largo* and is forever interrupting the fugue *allegro*.

The work is convincing in every way and proves in a manner understandable to the most sluggish of ears the profundity of the prelude.

And now,—Xenia. All I know is that she will be here early in June; that there was a formal announcement (her sister's idea) in order that "showers" might follow; and that I am, according to mother, as unprepared as though I were living on the streets (Xenia knows this and says she will accept even starvation with me "gracefully").

I had a letter from Mr. Poland in which I was offered a position without pay which, unfortunately, I could not accept.

I saw the family doctor today, and he tells me spontaneously that he is amazed at my health which he has never known to be better. He means mentally. No frustrations, etc. He says, if it continues, I will get even fatter.

I ran into a lady who has a daughter in much the same condition as Mark. And she claims that although the injections are necessary that they alone will not do the thing, that diet is of supreme importance. She has taken the whole matter very scientifically. Vitamins. Would you like to get in touch with her? Yeast. A vegetable juicer.

To Adolph Weiss

[early summer, 1935] | Location not indicated

Dear Mr. Weiss:

Your letter just arrived; it was very good of you to write. Somehow I am very sad that you are staying in New York. It is rarely that fine things come out of immense cities. Rather, it seems to me, reality is sucked in there and becomes unreal, meaningless.

In our association, although it was a short time, I came to feel very close to you. It is difficult to imagine a future for me which does not concern you.

With Schoenberg I have remained apart. Although in each one of the class sessions I have "gleaned" something extremely valuable, I have felt disturbed fundamentally by the mediocrity induced by the class members. Including myself, for it seems to me that I am dull at present. Last week Schoenberg asked me after the class if I would come to see him. Perhaps this would lead to working with him privately. But I hesitate to think so.

My direction is towards you. You have been so good to me that I cannot forget.

You have probably received another letter I wrote to you recently. I hereby state again that I will soon be married. This will mean a great deal.

Mr. Hoss is always the same, excellent. I just phoned him and he returns, or rather sends you best regards and good wishes from himself and Mrs. Hoss. John Cave,²⁵ a horn player, was visiting him. He is very much amused because of the near-identity of our names.

He says that he is very enthusiastic over my progress with the instrument. I have taken the beginnings slowly and I hope thoroughly. Now I must begin to “leap” forward.

Henry was down recently and said that he had written to you but had had no response.

I have not seen Dorothy and Grant. My friends who know them too, also do not see them. People seem to like Grant and his former wife, who is now dead, but nobody likes Dorothy. They criticize her inability to work with the dance; and, furthermore, criticize her as being a snob. This added to the distance to Redondo has deterred me from visiting them. Although when I met them with you I felt that Dorothy was fine. Generally I trust to first impressions.

My parents love you very much. My father has hopes of becoming wealthy and instituting every sort of thing for you that you would want. You would have only to whisper a wish and it would be amplified materially.

Have I made clear my position? I want to be with you working. You write to me that I should stick to Schoenberg. (I do not, by the way, consider myself a Schoenberg pupil; that designation is so cheap now that I am not interested in it; it is being bandied about by all those whose ears are vacant passageways for his words.) Synchronously, Schoenberg begins to show an interest in me. Whereas I feel that my study with you is unfinished. It obviously is. It is only the consciousness of a personal relationship which I am expressing.

I do feel that I must stay here until I am something of a horn player. That will be sooner, perhaps, than I had imagined. Within the year, Mr. Hoss says, I might be able to play in the Pasadena Orchestra.

I was building up a good discipline in New York, which in this climate has fallen somewhat to pieces. I accomplish a great deal, I think; but not as much as I could accomplish if I concentrated more. So far today I have accomplished my practising of the horn, about 2 hours; my scientific research work about 4 hours; and one undeveloped musical idea. I am often guilty of not thinking through to the end. I wish you would impart to me the secret of thinking completely; mother will then return a recipe for “tremendous vitality.”

A year’s longing, and this has taken time, has resulted in a favorable answer

25. Cave played for the Los Angeles Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and, later, the short-lived Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra.

from Xenia. She is a marvelous creature. Her world is almost without limitation: for she includes, from her mother (an Eskimo), an animal, pre-historic, primitiveness; and from her father (a Russian priest), the rich and organic mysticism and instinctiveness of Russians; and of herself she has found our own American insistence upon being contemporary and intensely speculative of the future.

You will excuse my taking the liberty of writing such a long letter.

It will not be luck or hope when I see you again; it will be necessity. And I am looking forward to it!

To Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Weiss

[early August 1935] | 1207 Miramar, Los Angeles

My dear Mr. and Mrs. Weiss:

It was very fine, receiving your card from Chatauqua,²⁶ because I know that you are enjoying the country and the escape from the city. With regard, however, to the program announced on the card:—I had, the day before, been at the Hollywood Bowl and sat through a very uninteresting performance of the Tschaikowsky *Sixth Symphony* in order to hear Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*, Heifetz playing superbly. And these continual complaints that we, if I may include myself among musicians, are making, I was forced to make again. After hearing the Tschaikowsky once, which I believe everyone who has entered a symphony hall has, I see no necessity for hearing it again, since, by virtue of sequence upon sequence and repetition upon repetition, one is forced hearing it once to hear it scores of times. And when it is unenthusiastically given, one can only be, in counting up the number of sequences and multiplying that by the number of times he has been forced to hear the whole thing, arriving at a huge number. And the programs here at the Bowl are generally bad: I shall be startled if there is something I want to hear very much. In place of the Tschaikowsky, which was played, the Sibelius *Fifth Symphony* had been announced. I have not heard it, and should have enjoyed hearing it. But it was not played. I received your card too late to listen to the radio; but I should have turned it off after the Beethoven. Am I doing something wrong? I find, however, that sometimes my whole

26. Properly, Chautauqua, an idyllic town in western New York, roughly eighty miles from Buffalo; home to the historic Chautauqua Institution.

attitude changes, and anything that has been written as music brings from me love and respect that a human being was able to have that idea and to express it in music. The attitude of joyful acceptance of everything, drawing no lines, never thinking of comparisons, so that everything has its own stature. The least has a beauty, just as has the most. And then I can forget criticism and listen singly, which is the happiest way of listening. To show you what a muddle I am conscious of getting into:—This “happiest of listening” that I have just mentioned cannot, perhaps, compare with the happiness of critical listening. Not the aesthetic criticism, but the listening to relationships, etc. (no matter what they are, for they necessarily exist in everything, no matter how apparently chaotic), and then making a judgement as to how valuable such relationships are.

I have many things to tell you, and must tell them. My father will soon be in Pittsburgh. He will stay at the William Penn Hotel. It seems a very short distance from there to Chautauqua. He would be very glad to see you and Mrs. Weiss. I hope that if you remain at Chautauqua that all of you will get in touch. I think Dad should have some sort of a vacation and visiting you at Chautauqua would be excellent. He is making some arrangements with Westinghouse with regard to his new inventions. I have been doing extensive research work for his new company; and that is what has given me the financial possibility of being married (which latter, by the way, is marvelous²⁷). I will give Dad your address, before he leaves, which he is doing in an airplane this week. I have given you his. I certainly hope he sees you.

My study with Schoenberg is progressing steadily. We have reached four-part counterpoint, second species. He is very good to us, and takes great pains teaching us. His English has become very good. He is even able to be witty with the use of words, which represents a certain level of mastery. He is moving, I believe, into another house. And I understand that he has been engaged by the University here for the entire year. They promise to present many of his works.

What with the work I have been doing in counterpoint, and the research work in science, I have been very busy. Too busy to do justice to the horn and Mr. Hoss. This was the case before I was married, so that I feel being married has not accomplished what was already true. So that, as you will be sorry to hear, I am not studying the horn any longer. I learned a great deal about the instrument, for which I am grateful; and I have become a friend of Mr. Hoss,

27. John Cage and Xenia Kashevaroff were married before the Hon. Henry C. Kelly, duly recorded by J. G. Livingston, clerk of the Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Yuma County, on June 7, 1935. Witnesses were Anna C. Molloy and Fama E. Townsend.

who is excellent. But doing things, I should like to do them well; and I had not the time. I had to make a choice: and the choice was obvious: to continue with Schoenberg and to support myself financially with the research work, which is not only money-making but fascinating, and often presents the same employment of mind that is presented in the study of music.

Xenia is an angel. We have been married now almost two months. It is always very beautiful. I look forward to her knowing you. For she will love you as I do and you will love her. Schoenberg mentioned the other day the necessity of constantly reviewing the work you have done. So that I think I shall begin teaching Xenia counterpoint, in that way making a review and also bringing us very close together.

I am going to write to you again shortly, ordering, if I may, one of your compositions. I have not decided which. Which would you want me to have? I can afford it, I think, now.

Mme. Scheyer²⁸ often speaks of you; I have loaned to her my copy of the recording of your songs.

August third we have a meeting of young composers, modern, of Los Angeles. I don't know exactly what will happen. Wm. Grant Still will be there, and some other negro composers. They have asked me to play something, but I refused, for I am a student too much now.

This is what is bothering me most now: Xenia and I may be sent to Pittsburgh to continue this research work. This will be the case if the arrangements with Westinghouse are successful. I will then be separated from Schoenberg. I do not know what to do. Fortunately it would not be for long. If it did occur, however, there would be the possibility of seeing you and Mrs. Weiss.

I think of you very often,—and write so little because and only because I am never knowing where to find time enough to do even my “work.” Never am I able to just go to sleep and think not at all about waking up. I always have to make some artificial arrangement about getting up. But I am exceedingly happy.

28. Galka Scheyer (b. Emelie Esther Scheyer, 1889–1945), German-American painter, art dealer, and art collector who promoted the work of The Blue Four—Lyonel Feininger, Alexei Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee—which kindled Cage's early enthusiasm in these artists. She and Pauline Schindler co-created art exhibitions and lecture series for various art venues along the West Coast.