

## CAGE & PAIGE: WE COULD GO ON AND ON

**Interviewer:** Now also two things I want you to notice, over here Mr Cage has a tape recording machine, which will provide much of the, will you touch the machine so we can know where it is, which will provide much of the background. Er, also he works with a stopwatch. The reason he does this is because these sounds are in no sense accidental, in their sequence. They each must fall mathematically at a precise point, so he watches his watch as he works. He takes it seriously, I think it's interesting, if you are amused you may laugh, er if you like it you may buy the recording.

*DRUM ROLL*

John Cage & Miss Elaine Paige in a new avant-garde musical, the West End hit...

**Cage:** Paige After Paige

*CYMBALS CLASH*

*CAGE MAKES VARIOUS ODD NOISES THROUGHOUT PAIGE'S FOLLOWING TEXT:*

**Paige:** The Kirby Stone Four with 'Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart' which was originally introduced in the 1934 Broadway revue Thumbs Up. And it's thumbs up for this next piece of news. A theatre company based in Newport, South Wales called Tin Shed are performing a very special outdoor theatre show this week. It's a reimagining of Herman Melville's classic novel... *LAUGH...* I said... *LAUGH...* I says Herman Melville's classic novel... *LAUGH...* I meant Herman Merille's classic novel... *LAUGH...* Herman, I can't say this man's name or the novel. It's a reimagining of Herman Melville's classic novel Moby Dick... *LAUGH...* telling the story of Ishmael a young man desperate to leave land and see the watery part of the world... *LAUGH...* It's a killer, not a killer whale... *LAUGH...* It's gonna be performed in a gondola... *LAUGH...* on the Newport Transporter Bridge... *LAUGH...*

*PIANO*

*PAIGE LAUGHING INTERMITTENTLY THROUGHOUT:*

**Cage:** Er, when I talk about music, it finally comes to people's minds that I am talking about sound that doesn't mean anything. And they say, you mean, it's just sounds? Thinking that for something to be just a sound is to be useless. Whereas I love sounds, just as they are, and I have no need for them to be anything more than what they are. I don't want them to be psychological, I don't want a sound to pretend that it's a bucket, or that it's a president, or that it's in love with another sound

*CAGE & PAIGE BOTH LAUGH*

I just want it to be a sound. And I'm not so stupid either, there was a German philosopher who's very well known, Immanuel Kant, and he said there are two things that erm, don't have to mean anything, one is music and the other is laughter, don't have to mean anything, that is, in order to give us very deep pleasure. You know that don't you?

**Paige:** This is brilliant

**Cage:** Yeah

**Cage:** I have the feeling that sound is acting. And I love the activity of sound. What it does is it gets louder and quieter, and it gets higher and lower, and it gets longer and shorter, it does all those things which I'm completely satisfied with that, I don't need sound to talk to me

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA' FROM EVITA "Have I said too much? There's nothing more I can think of to say to you"*

**Cage:** and that that sound doesn't have to be, uh, the communication of some deep thought, they can be just a sound

**Paige:** Pure and simple

**Cage:** Um, I think I expressed once the idea that you had discovered a world, a musical world

**Paige:** That was the beginning of me working in the West End really, because after Hair then I...

**Cage:** The sound experience which I prefer to all others, is the experience of silence

*SILENCE*

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'WITH ONE LOOK' FROM SUNSET BOULEVARD "Silent Music starts to play"*

**Cage:** I think the people are far more involved with their eyes than they are with their ears. But the interesting thing about the ears is that you can hear things that are behind you. Why can't people, they have two ears, they should be able to listen in at least two different ways. Making available to your ears what was already in the air and available to your ears but you couldn't hear it, in other words all it is is making audible something that you're already in. Now that sound could go in one ear and out the other, or it could go in one ear, permeate the being, hmm? transform the being, and then perhaps go out letting the next one in... LAUGH... I'd like to have my ears so I could hear what there was to hear... LAUGH... You know the hardest thing in the world of course is to have a head without any ideas in it

*MUSIC: CAGE INSTRUMENTAL UNDER THE FOLLOWING:*

**Cage:** We began to see a close relation not only between movement and music but also between space and time. Zero minutes, zero seconds – it's written in such a way that it could also be read Zero Feet, Zero inches. That follows from my feeling of our present living not in space *and* time but in space-time

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS AS TIME GOES BY "You must remember this, a kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh. The fundamental things apply as time goes by"*

**Cage:** It seems reasonable yes, time does go by. Now when we don't measure time, does it fly as you say, or does it stand still?

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA' FROM EVITA "The answer was here all the time"*

**Cage:** And when through art and through nature we move into a different awareness of time than that practical one, then I don't think it makes any difference to us whether we say it flies or it stands still. The question of time is one which interests me more and more

**Paige:** We could go on and on

**Cage:** For years and years and years... LAUGH...

**Paige:** How did that happen? A blink of an eye

**Cage:** We don't see much difference between time and space, we don't know where one begins and the other one stops... LAUGH... Simply being together in the same place and the same time

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'GETTING TO KNOW YOU' FROM THE KING & I "Getting to know you, getting to know all about you. Getting to like you, getting to hope you like me"*

**Cage:** My best friends, the people I most value, are those whom I don't understand, who always surprise me

*MUSIC: CAGE CLASHING PIANO AND OPERA, AUDIENCE LAUGHING*

**Paige:** The arrangement is fabulous

**Cage:** and this juxtaposition of things not ordinarily juxtaposed produces in many people the feeling of mirth

**Paige:** LAUGH

**Cage:** Yes, you want to know whether you can compare these two things. And um, well those are two things that I am not particularly interested in, that is to say I'm not particularly interested in quality, and I'm certainly not interested in comparisons between things. I think that we gain in awareness by seeing each thing in its own terms. If we think in terms of quality, that means that we are comparing the work which we experience with standards which represent our prejudices. Now if we can somehow empty our minds of those prejudices, then we possibly can approach our experience for what it is, that is to say directly. The reason it would be almost pointless to compare my work with that of Miss Elaine Paige, is that we are working in, the works are made in entirely different ways

**Paige:** Yes, absolutely

**Cage:** More and more in fact these things that would appear to be opposites strike me as being um, not only compatible but er, so to speak identical, hmm?

**Paige:** The audience was somewhat baffled... LAUGH...

**Cage:** I have difficulty with the notion of roles, in other words I don't want to play a role, I want to be so to speak er, what I am – if I am playing a role I want to play it all the time. If I'm not playing a role, I don't want to play a role, hmm?

**Paige:** I did indeed take the role of Grisabella in Cats by accident, absolutely, pure and simple

*MUSIC FROM CATS PLAYING SOFTLY UNDERNEATH:*

**Paige:** I got to my front door, dashed out of the car, ran to the front door, fiddling around trying to find the keys in my pocket and I looked down, and I see this bedraggled, pathetic sort of mangy looking black cat staggering toward me, and um, I'm trying to get it to cross my path because my mother always said to me that if a black cat crossed your path it meant, er, it would bring you good luck, so I'm trying to usher this cat across my legs, which I did, and I rushed into my house and I put the cassette in and I taped the song, having left the door open and when I looked back there was the cat, and it was so sort of pathetic and mangy-looking, I gave it a saucer of milk, and needless to say it stayed the night. And I'm playing this tape over and over on my Sony Walkman and I'm thinking to myself 'tomorrow I'm going to ring Andrew Lloyd-Webber and I'm going to say to him, "You have to let me record this tune, this song" because it sort of did something to me, connected with me in some major way. Anyway I didn't have to do any of this because the next morning my phone rang and I got up, went downstairs, answered the phone and it was Cameron Mackintosh on the phone saying to me, "Would you come down and talk to Trevor Nunn, and Gilly Lynn and myself about possibly taking over the role?" And I said, "Oh, well, I dunno, well yeah I guess, what does it involve?" and he said, "Well you don't have a lot of songs, there's only one song, you've only got one song to sing" And I said "Oh right" I said, "It wouldn't be called Memory by any chance, would it?"

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'MEMORY' FROM CATS "Memory, turn your face to the moonlight, let your memory lead you, open up, enter in"*

**Cage:** I want to be free of the memory, er that was also one of Duchamp's ideas, he said to reach the impossibility of transferring the memory imprint from one like object to another, for instance if you see two Coca Cola bottles, it's only the memory that makes you think that you could ignore the second one because it's the same as the first, it isn't

*MUSIC: PAIGE SINGS 'MEMORY' FROM CATS "The memory is fading"*

**Cage:** Now I look like a Cheshire cat

**Cage:** Now that we're on our last legs, the audience is beginning to sit up and enjoy itself...  
*LAUGH...*

**Paige:** *LAUGH...* God, oh, I think I'm tired, it's because it's near the end of the panto, I'm exhausted, I'm hysterical! *LAUGH...* Oh

**Cage:** I don't really, um, agree that life is a game, and I, I love as you know to play chess, but I do it, oh, um, as a, as a balance

*MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL FROM 'I KNOW HIM SO WELL' FROM CHESS CONTINUES UNDER:*

**Paige:** Chess, in its earliest form was going to be a record, just an album of an idea that Tim Rice had. And I have to say that probably since Evita, nothing had inspired me as much

*MUSIC: PAIGE (WITH BARBARA DICKSON) SINGS 'I KNOW HIM SO WELL' FROM CHESS: "Nothing is so good it lasts eternally. Perfect situations must go wrong. But this has never yet prevented me, wanting far too much for far too long"*

**Cage:** Is it your move or my move? Must be your move, I'm attacking the Knight

*MUSIC: PAIGE (WITH BARBARA DICKSON) SINGS 'I KNOW HIM SO WELL' FROM CHESS: "Looking back I could have played it differently, won a few more moments, who can tell? But it took time to understand the man. Now at least I know I know him well. Wasn't it good (oh so good), wasn't he fine (oh so fine), isn't it madness he can't be mine? But in the end he needs a little bit more than me, more security (he needs his fantasy and freedom). I know him so well"*

**Cage:** Games can only be played under certain circumstances. We couldn't play chess unless we had the board and the pieces and followed the rules, and none of that is what really, finally, interests us. What we want is an anarchy that works

*MUSIC: PAIGE (WITH BARBARA DICKSON) SINGS 'I KNOW HIM SO WELL' FROM CHESS: "Why am I falling apart? Wasn't it good? Wasn't he fine? Isn't it madness he won't be mine? But in the end he needs a little bit more than me, more security (he needs his fantasy and freedom). I know him so well. It took time to understand him"*

**Cage:** Reality simply can't be understood. Everything in life, even the simple things, are surrounded by mystery

*MUSIC: PAIGE (WITH BARBARA DICKSON) SINGS 'I KNOW HIM SO WELL' FROM CHESS: "I know him so well"*

**Cage:** Well, this game, er... *LAUGH...* I think is finished... *LAUGH...*

**Paige:** Wonderful to work with an such an inspiration

Cage: *LAUGH...* You're welcome, thank you. You want something to eat?

*MUFFLED SOUND AND NOTES OF MUSIC*