

for John Cage
“I am the Messiah!”

one performer
duration: up to 4’33”

Christopher DeLaurenti
2001

the setting

The performance may take place in any space; arrange any lights, resonant objects, and other environmental considerations in any way you wish.

the performance

Garbed in hieratic costume, quietly emerge and stand close to the audience – within inches, if possible. After a few seconds, walk *andante* 20 to 60 steps away from the audience. Quickly locate a proximate resonant place or object(s) and bellow in your loudest voice with the utmost conviction “I am the Messiah!”

Then proceed *attacca ad libitum* (running, crawling, rolling, shuffling, marching, etc.) closer towards the audience using your body as well as the phrase “I am the Messiah!” and any accompanying non-verbal exclamations *ad libitum* (whispering, hissing, declaiming, stomping, shouting, screaming, falling, etc.) to excite the resonant qualities of any proximate place or object(s). Your unshakable belief in your Divinity should guide your actions. When you sense or suppose that 4 minutes and 33 seconds will soon elapse, give a final throat-wrenching yell “I am the Messiah!” and freeze. Wait for applause, during which you may bow and exit.

Optionally, at 4 minutes 32 seconds, an assistant may give a simple, silent, second-long signal (standing up, turning the lights off or on, holding an item aloft, etc.). If you have not done so already, freeze and wait for applause, during which you may bow and exit.

notes

“I am the Messiah!” is (quite literally) a monodrama which may be performed live or recorded for playback over loudspeakers. For performance in a non-English speaking country, translate “Messiah” into a seldom used but immediately understood term for the locally favored Supreme Being(s). The duration is limited to 4’33” not only as a tribute to Cage’s landmark piece, but to preserve your body and voice.

To record “I am the Messiah!” substitute “microphones” for “audience” in the score. If no assistant is willing or available, use your intuition. Do not wait for applause. Document “I am the Messiah!” as an unedited field recording without overdubs. Do not use any compression, limiting, or gating of any kind. Any and all microphone distortion, clipping, and other rugged audio artifacts should remain in the piece. The recording should be raw, just like your voice and your soul after the performance.