

Listening Guide

Cage: Sonata V, from *Sonatas and Interludes*

DATE OF WORK: 1946 (first performed 1949)

OVERALL FORM: 16 Sonatas, in 4 groups of 4, each separated by an Interlude

FORM OF MOVEMENT: Binary

MEDIUM: Prepared piano

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR: Percussive effects, both pitched and unpitched.
Ethereal non-western timbre sounding like gongs (gamelan).
Changing rhythmic flow, seemingly without a clear meter.

A section—18 measures, grouped in irregular phrases (4 + 5 + 4 + 5 = 18).

Opening of Sonata V, with regular rhythmic movement:



2-voice texture at opening, with irregular sense of meter.

Upper line sustained over moving, lower line (in last 9 measures).

A section repeated.

B section—22½ measures, in additive meter (4 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 4½ = 22½)

Rests break movement into sections.

Quicker tempo, lines more disjunct and accented.

Second half of B section, with more disjunct lines and accents:



Sustained dissonance at closing.

B section repeated.