

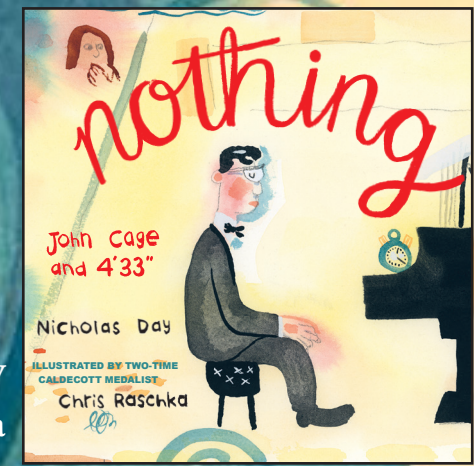


*A rain patters.  
A tree rustles.  
An audience stirs.*

What does nothing sound like?  
A history of John Cage's "4'33",  
a musical composition of blank bars.

Neal Porter Books  
**HOLIDAY HOUSE**  
Illustration © 2024, Chris Raschka

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Caldecott Medalist



On August 29, 1952, an audience at the Maverick Concert Hall waited with bated breath for the pianist David Tudor to start playing. Little did they know that the performance had already begun. Tudor was performing John Cage's "4'33", a composition unlike any other. Not a single note came from the piano, but the audience was shifting; birds were chirping; rain was pattering. Cage wanted us to notice what nothing sounds like. Is it ever truly silent? Or are we just not listening?

Did you know that there are recordings of "4'33"? There are dozens, in fact. And you can record your own: there is now a "4'33" app, released by the John Cage Trust, which allows anyone to record their own versions.

On the app and the website, there are hundreds of uploaded recordings from across the globe. You can hear water in Denali National Park in Alaska. Voices outside Mumbai. Night in Rwanda. A party in Iceland. A train in Taiwan. And then you can share your own moment in the world. Your own patch of sound. Your own 4 minutes and 33 seconds.



Download the app!

