

The essay discusses the early developmental phase of Fluxus, which George Maciunas called proto-Fluxus. Concentrating on the presentations of the New York Audio Visual Group, the Chambers Street performance series, events at the AG Gallery and the development of the publication, *An Anthology*, the article addresses the evolution of a Fluxus community and the development of a Fluxus performance sensibility.

PROTO-FLUXUS IN THE UNITED STATES 1959-1961: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIKE-MINDED COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS

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It is not possible to determine to any exact extent when Fluxus began. There was no initial manifesto which declared the birth or existence of Fluxus. It is misleading to cite the first Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden, Germany, or the first use of the word as a date for the conception, immaculate or otherwise, of Fluxus. This is due in part to the fact that Fluxus did not develop out of a specific ideological program, but rather out of a need for a mechanism to present and disseminate a growing number of new works certain artists were producing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In New York at that time, artists who were to become associated with Fluxus were part of a larger group of artists exploring the ramifications of post-Cagean thinking, especially as it related to a focus on the real world instead of traditional aestheticism. When a concept of a publication to be called *Fluxus* began to be formulated in the United States in 1961, it was to have potentially included a broad cross-section of artists who were concerned with similar post-Cagean issues and/or exploring related ideas in their work. Allen Kaprow, Walter De Maria, Robert Morris, and Simone Forte [Morris], were listed and several of their colleagues considered for inclusion, for example Al Hansen, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine. Conversely, some of the works by Fluxus artists, such as the assemblages of George Brecht and the Happenings of Dick Higgins, were initially seen in connection with the broader developments in the New York avant-garde rather than as directly connected to Fluxus. As this period developed, however, a more specific community of artists began to emerge who would become significant early contributors to activities of the Fluxus Group.

The years 1959 and especially 1960 were marked by an increasing number of new performance presentations by an ever-growing number of artists in New York. During this same period there were similar performances by groups and individuals in other cities both on the East and the West Coasts. In San Francisco in May 1960, for example, La Monte Young, De Maria and Terry Riley presented a simultaneous performance of four compositions by Higgins, Young, Riley and De Maria.¹ In New York during these years, the happenings of Dine, Oldenburg, Kaprow, Robert Whitman and Red Grooms were presented.² There were also a number of performances of new music, including the performance, "A CONCERT OF NEW MUSIC," presented by the Living Theater in March of 1960, which included works by John Cage, Kaprow, Brecht, Hansen, Robert Rauschenberg and Richard Maxfield. All of these performances, as well as others not mentioned, were important for the development of a new performative sensibility among proto-Fluxus artists. However, there were particular activities in New York that were central to the evolution of a community of like-minded artists who would eventually form the principle American contingent of the Fluxus Group. These included the activities of the New York Audio Visual Group, the performances presented as part of the Chambers Street series (December 1960 – May 1961) and those held at the AG Gallery (beginning in March 1961), and the compilation and production of the book, *An Anthology*.



Yoshimasa Wada, *Earth Horn*. Instrument made of copper tubing, 12.7 x 183 cm., 1974. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery. Vintage installation shot by Seiji Kakizaki.

Although several dates can be chosen for the beginnings of what Fluxus pioneer George Maciunas called the “proto-Fluxus” phase, 1959 was the first year in which activities and events started to bring together ideas and artists that would subsequently lead to the formation of a Fluxus Group. In mid to late 1959 and 1960 many artists who had met in John Cage’s class at the New School for Social Research in New York began to publicly present their ideas and works. One of the first of these artist-organized performance associations was the New York Audio Visual Group, a direct continuation of the interactions among the students in Cage’s class.³ Al Hansen described some of the group’s weekly activities as follows:

The New York City Audio Visual Group met on Sunday mornings at a Bleacher Street coffee shop called the Epitome where we performed and taped experimental notations. Very few of these tapes of these pieces are in existence, but usually a good crowd was there. There seemed to be a predilection for vocal works; I remember at that time I was very involved in making experimental notations for creating sounds. So were Dick Higgins and Jackson Mac Low, as well as several others who have disappeared into the mists of bohemia.⁴

“A Program of Advanced Music,” one of the Audio Visual Group’s first large public presentations took place on the seventh of April, 1959, in the Kaufmann Concert Hall in New York City. Included were works by

Hansen, Higgins, Cage and others. One of the specific works presented in this concert was Hansen's *Alice Denham in 48 Seconds*. Hansen described this performance as follows:

We used five-and-ten toys, broke bottles with hammers, nailed nails, and made rattles specifically for this performance by putting different amounts of nails and tacks and pins in boxes and taping them shut. One of the first big happenings in public for a theater audience was this performance of *Alice Denham in 48 seconds*, my music happening. The piece began with the curtain opening and proceeded from there. Toward the end of the piece, Larry Poons stopped nailing nails with a hammer and drumming on a table top with a broom handle and began to sweep up some of the debris. But he swept up the debris according to notation: so many movements in so many seconds.⁵

In August, 1960, the Group presented, "NEW MUSIC," another large public performance, at the Living Theater in New York City. The event included various compositions by Higgins, Ray Johnson, Reginald Daniels, Al Hansen and Jackson Mac Low. That same month, Dick Higgins wrote a statement formalizing the goals of the Audio Visual Group, which correlates in a number of ways to what would, by 1962, emerge as Fluxus' generalized objectives.

1. To provide performing ensembles and/or performing equipment for dramatic, musical, literary, cinematographic, and other artistic works which require either performing ensembles or performing equipment.
2. To provide means and/or assistance for the republication, publication, or release of artistic works in book periodical, recorded, printed, or graphic form.
3. To encourage experimentation in all the arts.⁶

Following this general lead set by the New York Audio Visual Group two other performance series were initiated in 1960 and 1961 that were to have significant impact on the later formation of the Fluxus group. These were the Chambers Street series and the performance series presented at the AG gallery.

Although there is no evolutionary link, it was the Chambers Street series that most directly continued sponsoring activities of the New York Audio Visual Group. Organized by the composer and musician La Monte Young, who had studied with Cage in Darmstadt, Germany and who moved to New York from San Francisco in 1960, the Chambers Street series was also intended to provide a forum for the presentation of experimental works in music, poetry, plays, events and other "new" art forms. Although it had no official name, it has come to be known as the Chambers Street series because the performances took place in a loft at 112 Chambers Street, rented by Yoko Ono and her first husband Toshi Ichiyanagi. Initially Young intended to present the works of over twenty-four artists, poets and musicians. In actuality, over the course of six months, he organized and presented performances of works by or

related to approximately eight individuals.⁷ Each performance took place over the course of two concurrent evenings.

The first presentation on the 18th and 19th of December, 1960 was devoted to the work of Terry Jennings, a composer and musician whom Young had known in California and who was then visiting in New York. There are two programs for this performance.⁸ The first of these, which stated, "There will be no public announcements. If there are names to be added to the mailing list, please send them to La Monte Young..." It is clear from Young's statement that the Chambers Street events were enacted for the performers themselves and for a select group of people who already knew or could understand the work being presented.⁹ In addition, the first program boldly announced that, "THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERIES IS NOT ENTERTAINMENT." While being interviewed by Eric Mottram in 1973, Dick Higgins explained that these events were a form of experimentation or "research art."

Higgins: La Monte was interested in...the new kinds of research art or whatever we wanted to call it – what we now call Fluxus, but then it was still research art.

Mottram: You mean that you were involved in exploring possibilities of systems, charts, randomizations....

Higgins: Systems, charts, randomizations and so on, but in a concrete way – that is, not for their own sake at all, not for the sake of the theory, but for the result of the experiment. The difference between this type of research and a normal research is that with a normal research, after the experiment is concluded, the shrimp are killed, or whatever you have been working with is destroyed....But in this case we were concentrating on our own results....

Mottram: It was, in fact, right from the start a kind of theater.

Higgins: Well, a kind of sequential witnessing, let's say; I wouldn't say theater, no. La Monte Young, for instance, very much rejected the concept of entertainment or of theatrical value, dramatic value; he likes to be, you might say, boring, although that is not what it was.¹⁰

The Audio Visual Group's presentations and the Chambers Street series can be linked to the development of proto-Fluxus in the United States not only because of the content and style of the performances but also because they set a precedent of an artists'-organized forum for this kind of work. The Chambers Street series was of particular significance because it reinforced associations between a group of artists, musicians and performers, many of whom would later form a significant core of the Fluxus group up through 1964.

Young met George Maciunas in a continuation of John Cage's experimental composition class taught by the composer Richard Maxfield at the New School for Social Research in late 1960 or early 1961.¹¹ Maciunas was subsequently invited to come to the Chambers Street series and it was there that he first became acquainted with Higgins, Mac Low, Henry Flynt, George Brecht and others who would later be

involved with the Fluxus group. It is important to note that this meeting did not serve as Maciunas' introduction to new art forms but rather to a new group of artists, musicians and poets.¹²

In 1960/1961 Maciunas and a fellow Lithuanian named Almus Salcius opened the AG Gallery at 925 Madison Avenue.¹³ For the most part, Maciunas was responsible for the events and performances presented at the gallery and Salcius for the selection and installation of the art works displayed.¹⁴ The first actual performance was "Bread & AG" an evening of literary works put together by Frank Kuenstler and presented on March 14, 1961. This performance was the first presentation of a two-part literary series that was scheduled to run through the 30th of June and consisted of eight different evenings in which the works of Jackson Mac Low, La Monte Young, Iris Lezak, Leroi Jones, Diane di Prima and others were presented.

Shortly after its opening, *Musica Antiqua et Nova* (Music Old and New), a seemingly incongruous multi-part musical performance series was presented at the gallery. According to the brochures Maciunas produced, these events were designed to "rejoice in the polychromy where it can be discovered – at the frontiers of the ancient and the very new music."¹⁵ In keeping with their organizer's didactic intentions, *the series* opened with two concerts (March 25th and April 16th) and one demonstration (May 14th) on the history of "concretism" in music, from medieval music to the then current experiments in magnetic tape music. The second segment of the series took place in May and June and included several performances by an instrumental ensemble that played music from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries on reproductions of antique instruments Maciunas was then importing from Europe; the third was devoted to the works of Richard Maxfield and was scheduled to be performed on the 17th, 21st and 28th of May. Soon thereafter, Maciunas initiated several additional series from March through July of 1961. These included presentations of new film and several series of electronic and new music by Higgins, Cage, Young, Mac Low, Flynt, Joseph Byrd and numerous others.¹⁶

Although the Chambers Street and the AG series included many of the same performers, composers, and artists, there were several major differences between the two. As part of an experimentalist approach, the Chamber Street events were deliberately directed toward a limited audience of the performers and other artists. On the other hand the various performances presented at the AG Gallery were specifically directed toward a broader, more general public, and were publicly advertised and open to anyone who came and/or paid admission.¹⁷ Thus, Maciunas expanded the idea of a presentation forum for "experimentation in the arts," as was the case for the members of the Audio Visual Group and participants in the Chambers Street series, and assumed the role of sponsor, and most importantly, public promoter. Maciunas' intent

for the various AG events was not only to present new work but, to develop a following for it which would support continued experimentation. His series was an educational program as well.

Musica Antiqua et Nova was in all probability organized as an introduction to the kind of music Maciunas labeled "concretism."¹⁸ The first program focused on the "rich polychromic palette of diversified and contrasted sounds in Medieval & renaissance instrumentation;" the second program, concentrated on "musical concretism from Moussorgsky till magnetic tapes"; the third presented "concretism in its most recent stage of development" which included works on magnetic tape by composers from Europe, the United States and Japan, including Cage and Maxfield. Although some artists, such as Henry Flynt, have subsequently stated that these performances were just a manifestation of Maciunas' more conservative leanings in this period,¹⁹ the material presented in this series and its recognition of the audience was much more than the reflection of conservative tastes. Maciunas' reasons for producing the variety of performances at the AG Gallery were multifaceted. He more than likely saw this as a potential means to generate income, but more importantly he saw this as an opportunity to establish an audience for new work that he found fascinating. The variety of programs that he developed were intended to educate and thus create both a market and an audience. The educative approach was an organized attempt by Maciunas to develop a wider audience for new musics and performance by documenting the connections between the history of classical music and the new concretist music.

Another major difference between the Chambers Street and AG series was that the programs that Maciunas organized for the AG Gallery were clearly directed toward both educating and *entertaining* the audience. Whereas in the Chambers Street series, the work itself and not the audience was of primary significance, in the AG Gallery events the performances were organized and developed specifically to appeal to the audiences.²⁰ A number of the AG announcements contain references to forms of popular entertainment, particularly "vaudeville." The use of the word vaudeville is significant both as a reference point for the audience and as a defining characteristic of certain forms of enjoyable and entertaining activities.²¹

Even at this early period, Maciunas' commitment to these presentations was a total one. As it would also later be the case with Fluxus, Maciunas worked during the day as a draftsman to help pay for the related costs of the gallery and the performance series, since they were not financially self-sufficient. This additional support, however, was not enough, and the costs of the gallery and Maciunas' earlier losses from various business ventures began to accumulate. The financial situation of the gallery rapidly got worse: after the end of June the performances were presented by candlelight because the power had been turned off.²² Sometime shortly after the presentation of Ray Johnson's "Nothing"²³ on the 30th of July, the AG Gallery went out of business.

Maciunas had begun to plan the development of a publication to promote and distribute information about the “research work” which was then being presented at the Chambers Street series and at the planned AG presentations as early as March of 1961. He was convinced that through the publication of a magazine that would be funded by the profits from the performances and other presentations at the AG Gallery, a wider audience for the work could be developed. Because of time and money constraints, however, this plan was postponed but, as a result, Maciunas became very excited when he heard about the plans for the publication of *An Anthology*.

The collection of poetry, music, performance scores and other work that has come to be known under the collective title *An Anthology* began as the result of a contact between La Monte Young and the poet Chester V. J. Anderson. In the Fall of 1960 Anderson, who had been editing the magazine *Beatitude* in San Francisco, came to New York where he attended a reading by Young and Mac Low during which they presented a number of other artists' work, including the work of Henry Flynt.²⁴ After this performance Anderson invited Young to guest-edit a planned issue of an East Coast version of the magazine *Beatitude*, to be called *Beatitude east*. Having been given free rein to include whatever kind of work he felt was appropriate, Young began to contact people and by early 1961 had collected a large body of material, including experimental music scores, essays, poetry and performance scores, from the United States, Japan and Europe, a collection Jackson Mac Low called a “triumph of knowledge, taste, imagination and industry.”²⁵ Young then gave these materials to Anderson and awaited the publication of *Beatitude east*. Nothing happened and it seemed that Anderson had disappeared with the collected materials. By May or early June, Anderson reappeared and returned the collected materials. *Beatitude east* had folded after only one issue.²⁶ Thus in June of 1960 Young and Mac Low had a collection of important work, but no outlet through which it could be publicly distributed. That same month, as Maciunas was photographing Young and Mac Low for an AG Gallery announcement, the collection of materials for the now defunct *Beatitude east* magazine was discussed and, as a result, the publication of *An Anthology* became a collaboration between Maciunas (designer), Young (editor and co-publisher) and Mac Low (co-publisher). The actual production of the master copy of the book began in the loft of a friend of Maciunas' sometime after the middle of September. Jackson Mac Low wrote of the design process:

I remember George as sitting at his drafting table for 2½ days solid, producing the now-famous designs for the title pages and section titles of ANTHOLOGY. The rest of us typed poems, essays, etc., on George's IBM...²⁷

Maciunas' finished design was an example of his sometimes peculiar attempts to minimize costs that resulted in a striking visual unity for the diverse materials contained in this collection of scores, poems, essays



George Maciunas, editor, *Flux Year Box 2*, New York: Fluxus Edition, ca. 1968. Boxed collaborative multiple, 19.7 x 19.7 x 8.9 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection. This copy contains objects, games and scores by George Brecht, Willem de Ridder, Frederic Lieberman, Ken Friedman, Claes Oldenburg, James Riddle, Paul Sharits, Bob Sheff, Ben Vautier, Robert Watts and film loops by Eric Andersen, George Brecht, John Cale, John Cavanaugh, Albert Fine, Dan Lauffer, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Paul Sharits, Stan Vanderbeek, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell and Robert Watts. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

and events. He used a variety of colored paper stock (cheap kraft papers) which he already had in his possession to reduce the overall production costs of the book. The result of this cost cutting procedure, combined with Maciunas' designs, was the creation of a book that possesses a distinctive physical presence. The designs of the title pages were the main graphic inclusions by Maciunas. In these designs a striking use of type placement and size shifts created a visual rhythm that both played off and reinforced the meaning of the text.²⁸ After the mechanicals were produced Maciunas sold his stereo to Dick Higgins to cover the down payment on the printing work for *An Anthology*.²⁹

The publication project was significant for the formation of Fluxus because it helped to solidify developing relationships among a group of artists interested in experimental work in poetry, music, theater and the visual arts. Many of the artists whose work was included in *An Anthology* or who worked on its production became the initial members of the Fluxus Group, for example, La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, George Maciunas, Henry Flynt, Emmett Williams and George Brecht.³⁰ The artists organized and produced collective publication became a catalyst for the subsequent development and publication of several collective Fluxus anthologies, including *Fluxus Review Preview* (1963), *FLUXUS I* (ca. 1964) and *Flux Year Box 2* (ca. 1966). In fact it could be argued that Fluxus began as a publishing venture that largely resulted from the artists experience with *An Anthology*.

During the production process, Maciunas saved many of the works not included in *An Anthology* and asked Higgins, Philip Corner, Mac Low and a number of other artists, for additional contributions intending to publish a second anthology. Young was not interested in being involved in a second book and Maciunas proceeded to develop the new publication on his own.

I thought I would go ahead and make another publication with all the pieces that were not included in *Anthology*. More or less newer pieces....So the initial plan was just to do another, like a second *Anthology* book except graphically it would have been...less conventional than the first one, which means that it would have had objects and you know, a different kind of packaging.³²

In fact, Maciunas had been thinking about producing a publication for at least several months prior to his involvement with *An Anthology*. In the announcement for one of the early *Musica Antiqua et Nova* programs printed prior to the 25th of March, he stated that, "Entry contribution of \$3 will help to publish Fluxus magazine."³³ It was in relation to this plan that the word Fluxus first came to be used in conjunction with the experimental post-Cagean work in music, poetry and the visual arts that had been developing in the United States, Japan and Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In an interview with Larry Miller, Maciunas discussed the origin and the intended use of the word Fluxus:

LM: I'd like to ask you about the name Fluxus, I mean, where did it come from?

GM: That came while we were still thinking in New York of what to call the new publication.

LM: When you say 'we,' you mean you and La Monte.

GM: No, La Monte sort of didn't care and then was mainly me and my gallery partner, 'cause he was going to maybe call the gallery that or something. Then the gallery went bankrupt so it didn't matter; he dropped out so he's out of the picture.

LM: He's not an artist.

GM: No. So basically it was me alone then who finally determined we were going to call that name and reason for it was the various meanings that you'd find in the dictionary for it, you know, so that it has very broad, many meanings, sort of funny meanings. Nobody seemed to care anyway what we were going to call it because there was no formal meetings of groups or anything.

LM: The name was thought of at first to refer to...

GM: Just to the publication.

LM: A publication called...

GM: Fluxus, and that's it, that was going to be like a book, with a title, that's all.³⁴

The first use of the word Fluxus by Maciunas was thus not as a reference to a style, an attitude towards art, or even a group but simply as a title for a publication. Before these plans for the development of the magazine could be put into practice, however, Maciunas left the country to work in Europe.³⁵ While there he continued to plan for the development and production of this projected publication, keeping in contact with numerous American artists, especially Dick Higgins. By the beginning of 1962, however, the plans for Fluxus were translated from a magazine into a subscription-based series of anthologies and a performance series which was to tour Europe, Asia and America. It was only as the idea of Fluxus later developed in Europe that Fluxus gained a more specific focus, emphasizing action music and events, with a more specifically anti-institutional stance. Thus, it was not until some time after 1962 that the "Fluxus Group" and the specific kinds of works which have come to be associated with it, fully emerged.

NOTES

¹ *happening & fluxus*, ed. Hans Sohm (Cologne, 1970), n.p.

² For information on the various happenings performed in this period see Michael Kirby, *Happenings* (New York, 1965).

³ This group was also called at various times The Audio Visual-Group and the American Audio-Visual Society.

⁴ Al Hansen, *A Primer of Happenings and Time/Space Art* (N.Y., 1965), p. 102.

⁵ Hansen, p. 102.

⁶ Dick Higgins, [untitled manuscript], dated August 5, 1959, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

⁷ These performances, which began in December of 1960 and ran through May of 1961, featured the work of Terry Jennings (December 18–19, 1960), Toshi Ichiyanagi (January 7–8, 1961), Henry Flynt (February 25–26, 1961), Joseph Byrd (March 4–5, 1961), Jackson Mac Low (April. 8–9, 1961), Richard Maxfield

(April. 29–30), and La Monte Young himself (May 19–20, 1961) and Simone Forti (May 26–27, 1961). In addition to these documented performances there were several other activities, the most notable of which was a constructed sculptural environment by Robert Morris in June of 1961.

⁸ Copies of both of these programs are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

⁹ George Brecht made this same observation in a personal interview in Cologne on June 18, 1988. It is important to note that Young himself was very interested in the audience as a social situation. For more information on this aspect of La Monte Young's work see Michael Nyman, *experimental music Cage and beyond* (London, 1974), pp. 70–72.

¹⁰ Dick Higgins, "Call it 'Something Else'" Dick Higgins in Conversation with Eric Mottram, *Spanner*, No. 9 (1973), p.160; hereafter referred to as *Spanner* No. 9.

¹¹ Peter Frank and Ken Friedman, "FLUXUS A Post-Definitive History: Art Where Response is the Heart of the Matter," *High Performance*, 7, No. 3 (1984), p. 39. Maciunas, who had been born in Lithuania came to the United States with his family after World War II. In 1949 he enrolled at the Cooper Union School of Art and studied art, graphic art and architecture until 1952. In 1952 he transferred to The Carnegie Institute of Technology. There he primarily studied architecture, but also became involved in music performance and history. In 1954, after receiving his Bachelors Degree in Architecture, Maciunas left the Carnegie Institute to take care of his mother (his father had died that year) and he began to work for an architect, mainly as a draftsman. Maciunas quickly tired of this job. He came to believe that young architects were often consigned to drafting, which required neither talent nor education. In 1955 he went back to school at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, to study art history and to get an advanced degree so that he could eventually teach. At the Institute of Fine Arts Maciunas became engrossed in working on a project to map the history of art in graphic form. In the spring of 1960 when his favorite professor died, he lost heart in becoming an art history professor and soon quit New York University.

¹² By the time of these meetings Maciunas had some knowledge of this new work and its historical precursors through Maxfield's class at the New School for Social Research and through his graduate studies at New York University through which he had been exposed to the ideas of eastern philosophy, such as Zen, and the works of the Dadaists, Futurists and Surrealists.

¹³ The name of this gallery was derived from the first letter of each of the partners first names, A = Almus and G = George. Dick Higgins remembered that the "...situation in 1961 was, then, that work existed for which there was no outlet. And it was in that year that George Maciunas contacted a large number of the people who had been doing or proposing happenings since the beginnings some years earlier. Maciunas was a friend of Richard Maxfield, a pioneer in electronic music, and he [Maciunas] had a half interest in an art gallery...Maciunas wanted his AG Gallery to sponsor a series of festivals of the avant-garde of all kinds and in all media, as opposed to the purely visually-oriented work being promoted by the galleries. Of course we all jumped for joy and arranged to do performances. This resulted in a series of about twelve really exciting concerts and readings and Happenings." Dick Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," *art and artists*, 7, No. 7 (October. 72), p.16.

¹⁴ Jackson Mac Low, "Wie George Maciunas die New Yorker Avantgarde kennenlernte" in *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*, eds. Rene Block and Anne Marie Freybourg (Wiesbaden, 1983), p. 110. Most of the painting displayed at the AG Gallery was the type of work that fell in the categories of action painting and/or Tachism, although both Maciunas himself and Yoko Ono also had exhibits of their work at the AG Gallery. It is worth noting that Maciunas' interest in this kind of work, although seemingly somewhat retrograde for the early 1960s, was directly connected to his interest in chance, indeterminacy and oriental philosophy. His own paintings that were shown in the AG Gallery were produced by dropping ink onto heavily soaked paper and letting the interactions of the ink and the water determine the pattern or design.

¹⁵ George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova," [announcement brochure], n.d., Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

¹⁶ Specifically these performances included "Cinema Frontiers" on March 21 and 28, April 4 and 11, and "Cinema Frontiers 4 Evenings of Surrealism" on May 9, 16, 29 and 30; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Festival of Electronic Music" scheduled to run on four evenings from June 4th to June 28th, which presented the works of a variety of artists including Dick Higgins, John Cage, Jackson Mac Low, Earle Brown, David Johnson; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Concerts of New Sounds & Noises," also started in June, and presented on the evenings of the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th and included works by Toshi Ichianagi, Jackson Mac

Low, and Joseph Byrd; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Evenings" on six different days in the month of July including performances of works by La Monte Young, Henry Flynt, Walter De Maria and Ray Johnson. Examples of the various brochures that Maciunas designed and produced for these performances are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

¹⁷ in the announcement for the first "Musica Antiqua et Nova" series Maciunas indicated his interest in not only presenting a variety of work but also in making it more accessible. The size of the audiences for the different performances at the AG Gallery varied from around 5 to 25 and although they were mostly made up of people who were interested in this kind of work they were not restricted to only people who had been specifically invited. Dick Higgins, *Spanner*, No. 9, p. 161.

¹⁸ In a text from 1962 Maciunas stated that concretism was, "...against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art; Anti-art [concretism] is life, is nature, is true reality..." George Maciunas, "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art," n.d. [ca spring 1962], Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

¹⁹ Henry Flynt, "Mutations of the Vanguard: Pre-Fluxus, During Fluxus, Late Fluxus," *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus* 1990–1962, ed. by Gino di Maggio and Bontio Oliva, (Milan, 1990), p. 105.

²⁰ Concerning this difference, especially with regards to humor, Henry Flynt wrote that the "...work of the Cage and Young circles had often been elegant, cerebral, exalted – without having been in the least pompous or academic. In no way did the work necessarily signal debasement. Maciunas did not appreciate the cerebral and the exalted. He turned toward jokes and vulgarity. Increasingly, the public welcomed this, relieved at being allowed to escape from formidable art. All this was crucial in shaping and establishing the Fluxus esthetic." Henry Flynt, p. 112.

²¹ Vaudeville is one of the words which Maciunas will consistently use as characteristic of Fluxus, especially after 1964.

²² Mac Low, p.115

²³ When the audience members arrived at the gallery they first encountered the darkened stairway up to the second-floor gallery space. If they tried to mount the stairs they would discover that Johnson had placed loose pieces of wooden doweling on the stair treads to impede the ascent. Finally, if they managed to make it

up the stairs, they found the gallery door locked and "nothing" in the gallery.

²⁴ Mac Low, pp. 113–114.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁸ For more information on Maciunas' design style for this project and others see, Barbara Moore, "George Maciunas: A Finger in Fluxus," *Artforum*, 21, No. 2 (October 1982), pp. 38–45.

²⁹ Mac Low, p. 115. "Del Mar," on Lafayette St., was selected by Maciunas because they had printed the announcements for the AG Gallery and he thus felt that they could competently follow his instructions.

³⁰ The work of a number of the other artists included in this anthology was also presented in later Fluxus performances even though they themselves were not directly involved in the development of the group. They included: John Cage, Richard Maxfield, Toshi Ichiyangi, and Terry Riley. The connection between *An Anthology* and the later Fluxus performances is reinforced by the fact that a number of the pieces that were included in this publication were the exact works that were performed in a number of the Fluxus festivals and presentations, among them Young's compositions, Brecht's events and Mac Low's poetry.

³¹ George Maciunas, "Transcript of the Videotaped interview with George Maciunas by Larry Miller," March 24, 1978 in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York, 1983), p. 14; hereafter referred to as M/M Interview.

³² George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova" [performance brochure], n.d. [ca. March 1961], Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

³³ M/M Interview, p. 16.

³⁴ Even though Maciunas left the United States he continued to participate in the production process of *An Anthology*. There are several letters from Maciunas to La Monte Young from the Fall and Winter of 1961 that include ideas and suggestions for this publication, particularly about the cover and the means of binding the collection. These letters are now part of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection in New York and Detroit.



George Maciunas, *Gift Box for John Cage: Spell Your Name with These Objects*. Box with twelve removeable parts, 10.5 x 23.8 x 5.4 cm., ca. 1972. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Gift of John Cage. Originally included in the exhibition, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*. Beaumont-May Gallery, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, November 22, 1978–January 14, 1979.