John Cage, the man who singlehandedly changed the way we hear and think about music, is now seventy years old but shows no sign of slowing down. In a performance and a pair of lectures sponsored by the MIT Writing Program and the Museum of Fine Arts, Cage the composer presented his own thoughts on Cage the composer.

Cage is perhaps best noted for his introduction of chance procedures into the composition of music. As he explains it: "Music should not be the making of choices, but rather the answering of questions." Using random operations to determine the notes and structure of a piece frees Cage to explore all the possibilities inherent in those notes. Pianist Steven Drury explained in the program notes for the MFA performance:

Cage lives up to Henry Cowell's description of him as a composer who is "getting rid of the glue." By setting sounds free from the "glue" of the composer's ego or desire to express himself, Cage gives the listener the materials, the opportunity, and the responsibility to create his or her own melodies, phrases, and harmonic rhythm if such terms remain at all useful. As Emerson said in The Poet, "Any man can do any mechanical or body work, but if during his lectures of 1963 John Cage was asked how the composition of his piece before he decided on the actual notes to be played. The composition consists of a limited number of notes and chords on violin and piano, and in played as a set of single line melodies. It was difficult to believe the most melodic piece performed with solo violin, but, in comparison to the Etudes Australes, the piece didn't hold together as coherently. The three sections performed truly sounded like a collection of random notes, with no detectable thread or process to hold them together.

The third piece performed, Six Melodies for Violin and Keyboard, data from Cage's rhythmic structure period, in which Cage determined the rhythmic outlines of a piece before he decided on the actual notes to be played. The composition consists of a limited number of notes and chords on violin and piano, and is played as a set of single line melodies. It was difficult to believe the most melodic piece performed with solo violin, but, in comparison to the Etudes Australes, the piece didn't hold together as coherently. The three sections performed truly sounded like a collection of random notes, with no detectable thread or process to hold them together.

The mezzosionics used in the essay (method, structure, intention, discipline, notation, indeterminacy, interpretation, imitation, devolution, and circumstances) are according to Cage the most important aspects in his work. Taken as a whole, then, Composition is not only a retrospection but Cage's commentary on the most important aspects of the creative process.