

Spring 3-22-2022

## A Festival of Form: Score

Anthony Elia  
aelia@smu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries\\_bridwell\\_research](https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries_bridwell_research)



Part of the [Aesthetics Commons](#), [Composition Commons](#), [Dramatic Literature, Criticism and Theory Commons](#), [Epistemology Commons](#), [Musicology Commons](#), [Music Theory Commons](#), [Other Music Commons](#), [Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Philosophy of Mind Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Elia, Anthony, "A Festival of Form: Score" (2022). *Bridwell Library Research*. 31.  
[https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries\\_bridwell\\_research/31](https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries_bridwell_research/31)

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the Bridwell Library at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bridwell Library Research by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

A  
Festival  
of

*form*

by Anthony J. Elia  
Dallas, TX ~ March 2022

# A Piece Played Only Once

Duration: ~168 hours (Sunday–Sunday)

Location: Dallas, TX // March 2022

Composer: Anthony J. Elia; Co-composers: John Cage, Kyle Gann, Christopher Anderson, Marcell Steuernagel, and those in attendance *or proximity*.

## INTRODUCTION

The idea and reality of music without exception comes with the understanding that some *form* of that music or sound will be repeated—perhaps not exactly, but that it will be rendered again, it will be passed from one person to another. Certainly, all performances of a work are different and distinct, giving each one a particular flavor and essence.

With the present work, this accepted idea is brought into question and challenged with the following consideration: *can we have a piece of music or work of sound-art that is meant to be performed or enacted only once and never again?* Indeed, that is the question I am posing with the present piece and the specific interpretation of the activities that took place on the SMU campus during the week of March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The events themselves were styled around the work by John Cage titled *Organ<sup>2</sup>/ASLSP* “As Slow as Possible” and labeled “A Festival of Form: John Cage & the Infinite Human.” These activities were meant to highlight the works, collections, and exhibits of Bridwell Library on the SMU campus. But these activities were also meant to be part of a performance piece—a work of music and art—“orchestrated” through an ensemble of players, performers, students, staff, faculty, and attendees. The “orchestra” was everyone, everything, and everywhere. The performance did not stop and had amorphous beginnings and endings. And perhaps the most significant and concentrated “movement” was Christopher Anderson’s rendering of “ASLSP” on March 8<sup>th</sup> from 6am–10pm.

A second part of this question to this “music” then is: *what constitutes the score of it?* And further, *why should there be a score if the piece is only intended to be performed once?* The score is an art object I created that is 5-foot long on synthetic foam and drawn in black ink. It was presented to Kyle Gann at the start of the festivities on March

7<sup>th</sup> at Bridwell Library. The purpose of writing a score that will never be played again—and is intended *never to be done* again is to provide a record of its existence. It is also an uncharacteristic political act of “anti-music” which is to say that it alienates the composer and performers from engaging those of the future from partaking in such an event, thus defeating the core ideal of musical perpetuity and form that music be repeated. The foam score is as much the notation and representation as Bridwell Library and Perkins Chapel are the score and performances spaces, thus blurring the lines of all musicality.

## A FESTIVAL OF FORM: A piece for not repeating

### 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: Sunday Arrival (March 6<sup>th</sup>)

*Drip Music at HPUMC & Improvisation Prayer Piano*

Lecture and discussion about “modern classical music” at HPUMC along with performance of Brecht’s “Drip Music” and an improvisation of meditative piano music by Elia as the closing prayer for the Discovery Class.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: Monday (March 7<sup>th</sup>)

*Lecture – Intros* by SMU Deans, faculty, Bridwell Staff

*Hadrosaur II Variations* by Courtney Brown

*Dinner in the Dark* by Catering, SMU faculty, staff, admin, John Cage

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement: Tuesday (March 8<sup>th</sup>)

*16-Hours: Chris Anderson performs John Cage & accompanying audience,* including more than 1,000 online visitors

### 4<sup>th</sup> Movement: Wednesday (March 9<sup>th</sup>)

*Opera Screening, Lectures, Music, Cage’s “Lecture on Nothing,” Evening Concert of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modernists, Cage, and Gann* in Perkins Chapel

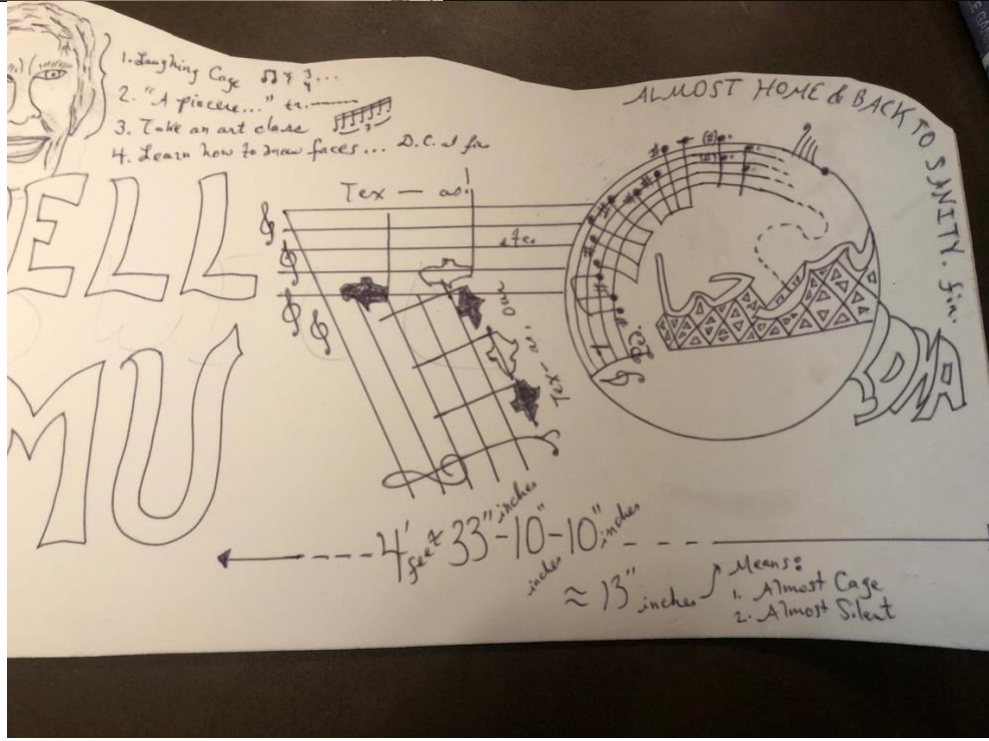
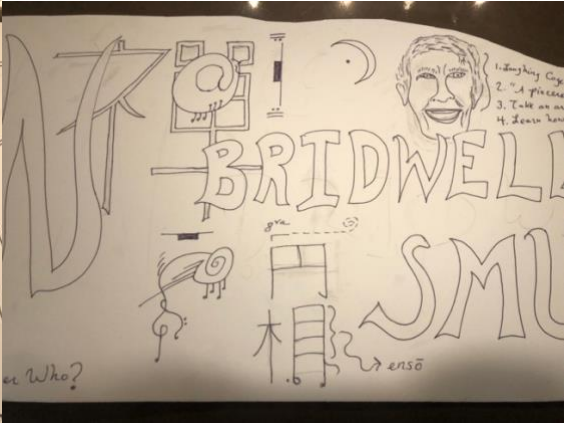
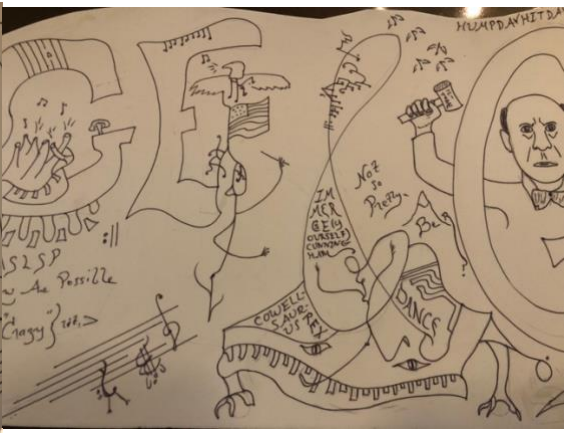
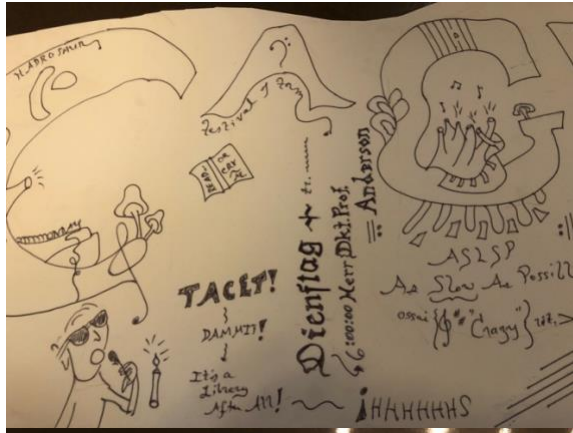
### 5<sup>th</sup> Movement: Thursday (March 10<sup>th</sup>)

*City Travels, Art Museums, Installations, Class, Afterparty*

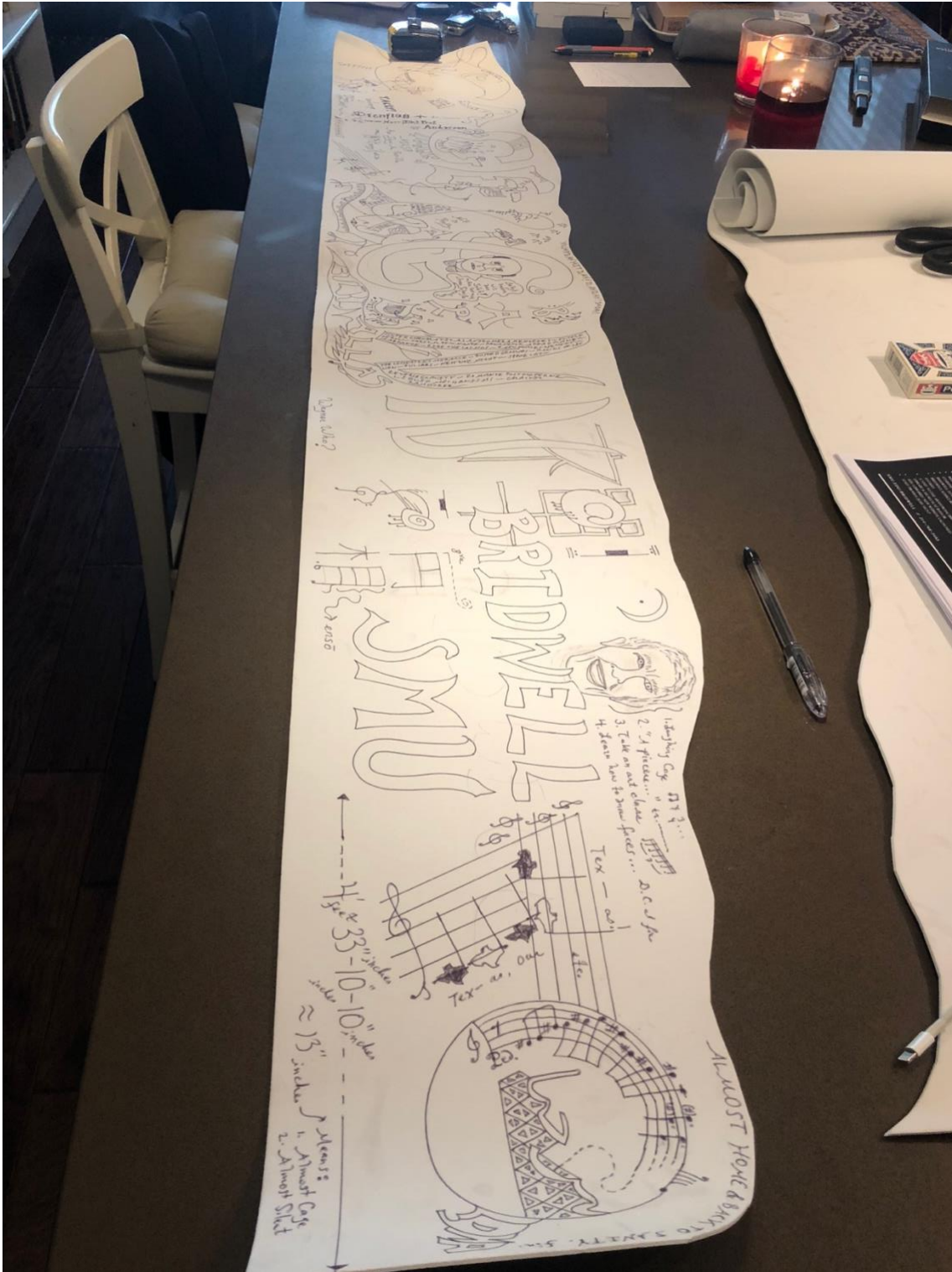
### Epilogue/CODA: Friday–Saturday–Sunday (March 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>)

*Departures—Emails—Dinner—Reflection*

*The End?*



Portions of 5-foot score of the week's activities. (Above version was not completed at time of photo; presented to Kyle Gann, March 7; un-scrolled version below).







March 8, 2022 @6:30AM ~ Perkins Chapel, SMU  
“Conducting the Building, Conducting Constant Sound,  
Conducting our Surroundings..., Or, Are *We* Being Conducted?”

Anthony J. Elia “conducting” the Chapel at the start of  
Dr. Anderson’s performance of ASLSP  
Photo by Francesco Comito