

Spring 3-20-2022

Broken Chair Chaconne

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Recommended Citation

Elia, Anthony, "Broken Chair Chaconne" (2022). *Bridwell Library Research*. 34.
https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries_bridwell_research/34

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Broken Chair Chaconne
By Anthony J. Elia
Dallas, TX ~ March 20, 2022

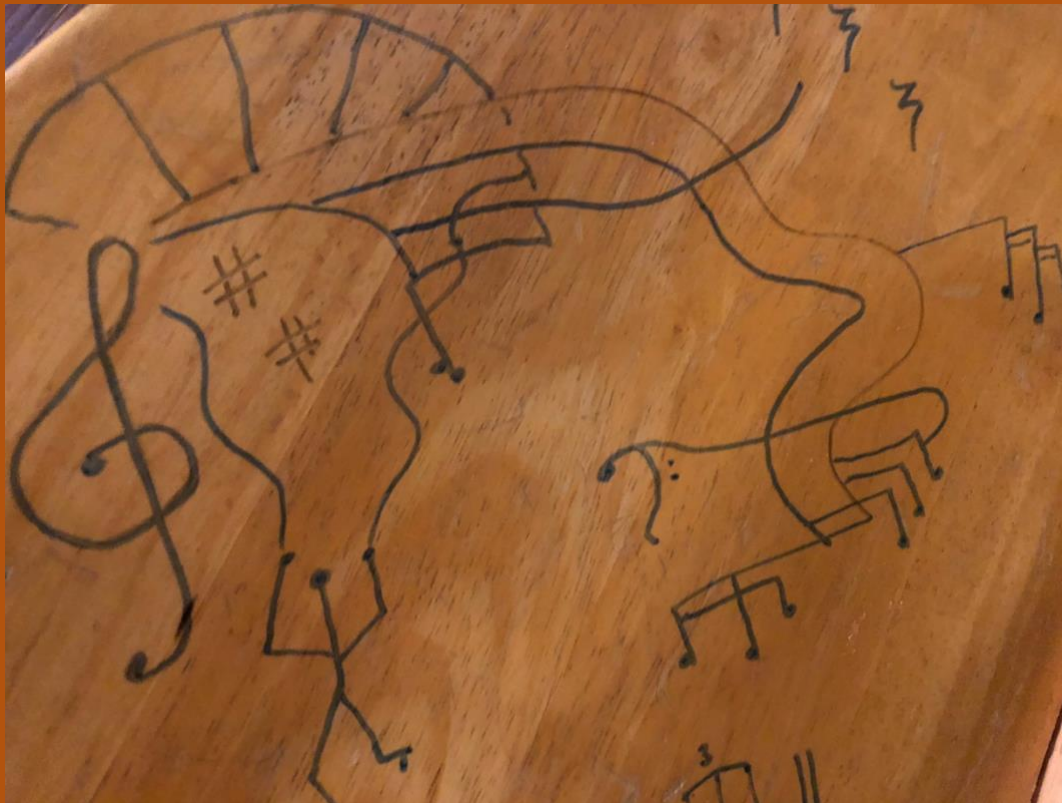
DESCRIPTION

In March 2022, I was working at my computer when this increasingly rickety chair collapsed beneath me! It was time to get back to responsible eating and get a new chair. But amid the intensive planning and production of *The Festival of Form: John Cage and the Infinite Human* events, it occurred to me that I could play around with the ideas of music, sound, noise, and silence, and particularly the unconventional experiments of notation and scoring. Shortly after this chair broke, I took a sharpie pen to it and began to notate it like a score, along with some of



of the hallmark stick-figures I'd drawn into my drawings of Stravinsky and Bach around the same time. In this instance, the ideas of music and notation merge with art, experience, and various areas of interpretation. In the manner of Cage, we might ask: *What was the music? What is the score? What do the notations indicate or refer to? Was the action or sound of the chair breaking and me falling to the floor a form of "unintended music?" Is there a relationship between sound and score, or even the fact that the object of destruction became the very material score?* Certainly, many other questions might be had about this. In determining how to call this piece, whether a score, form of notation, or even contemporary

performance art, I often use alliterative descriptors as titles. The best fit for this I thought was *chaconne*, a Spanish musical style or work that is known for its “short repetitive ground bass” that also contains flourishes, added melodies, and musical decoration. Perhaps it is suitable, for the literal “bass” crashing of my rear to the floor was its own rhythmic contribution to the “Broken Chair Chaconne!” Whatever the interpretation of the work is—whether it is another example of a “once and only once performed” work (due to its accidental nature) or it is seen as something more diffuse or expansive in the contemporary arts—it remains a curiosity for the public to consider. [Though I had thought of keeping the physical piece, I eventually recycled it to make space in my home].



Close up image (above) shows example of stick figures coming to life through the notated drawings upon the broken chair. Perhaps a character parachuting from his symphonic score chair—fall on the left? Or a pianist stick figure emerging from a six-note-legged piano to play something?



Different angle shows a floating triplet on repeat (what to do!?) and some floating quarter rests, as if they were a sequence of moons or even a flock of birds.





Even spindles were not spared the tyranny of the notating pen!

