

Bridwell Library & Perkins Sacred Music Program Present

A FESTIVAL OF FORM

John Cage & the Infinite Human

An avant-garde festival of music, sound, silence, art, and books
at Bridwell Library & Perkins Chapel

featuring

A 16-hour performance of Cage's Organ²/ASLSP
"As Slow as Possible"

Lecture and music by composer, music critic,
and Cage scholar

Kyle Gann

and viewing of Bridwell's current exhibits

SYMBIOSIS OF SCRIPT, FONT, AND FORM:

A SELECTION OF ARTISTS' BOOKS



Theology and Art of the Score

Free and open to the public

March 7–9, 2022 on the SMU campus

For more information and
registration details visit

[Bridwell News](#)



A FESTIVAL OF FORM

John Cage & the Infinite Human

Anthony J. Elia

What is *A Festival of Form*? Over the last year a confluence of activities converged at Bridwell Library, which led us to the present moment: the lingering pandemic and the reorientation of providing institutional services during these times, the reopening of a library space that was under renovation for nearly two years, the curation of our first major exhibit (*Symbiosis of Script, Font, and Form*) in more than twenty-six months, and the readjustment of the university community to new realities of life and work. Amid this, an occasion arose to engage with the Perkins Sacred Music Program on the performance of a major John Cage work—Organ²/ASLSP “As Slow As Possible”—in Perkins Chapel. As moments, hours, days, and months have quickly slipped by and the notions of how our traditional sense of time, space, and boundaries was being challenged on a regular basis, the opportunity presented itself for our community to come together and embrace the notion of change through our evolving notions of form. This idea is one that demands our constant attention, because it is *in* and *through* form that we navigate, negotiate, and interrogate the world around us, and ultimately come to reflect upon it and live back *into* that world.

The question of *form* then can be applied to anything we think and do—about music, art, reading, books, religion, Christianity, Methodism, human creativity, and more. By considering ideas of *form*, we are considering what it means to live in this world that is constantly challenging us with questions about “what is real” and “what is fake?” The twentieth century was a period when the ideas around *defining* things—whether music, art, or even theology—set in motion a revolutionary epoch of human interrogation of the world and its forms. Today, we are still living through these constant interrogations, experiencing not simply the existential notions of *how to define something*, but the even more radical question *does anything even have form to define itself by?* Of course, we still live in a world where we inherently define things, even if philosophically we are challenged to find absolute definitions for anything anymore. While these interrogatives may seem overtly pretentious, obscure, and irrelevant to some, they are very real questions that play into the labors we undertake each and every day.

John Cage’s work was profound and groundbreaking—sometimes ridiculed, and even funny—because it dismantled our notions of how the world theretofore defined music. The *form* of music was now in doubt, because notions of sound, noise, and silence blended together with the concepts of

performance, listening, and experience. Confusion, disdain, uncertainty, and other unnerving feelings of the human experience just as well became part of how form (or *formlessness*?) was at the core of musical understanding. Today, these interrogations continue and can be applied to not simply music, but art and all aspects of our work and lives: *what is a book, a library, an exhibit, a performance, a church, a congregation, a Methodist?* We live our lives in accordance with the boundaries and articulations of generations of rules, descriptions, and definitions, only to find ourselves in tension with these prescriptions when one thing or another seems out of place—when one form or another challenges our preconceived notions and visions of the world around us.

What is embodied in *A Festival of Form* and in this accompanying exhibit *Theology and Art of the Score* is meant to tie together disparate notions of *form* through space, place, design, image, and experience. It is also meant to draw together the curatorial wonders of the *Symbiosis* exhibition, which itself pushes the limits of what we call “a book.” Art, music, and literature are combined in constructively creative ways, which both puzzle and inspire us, and such paradoxes are merely reflections of our own very complex lives as individuals and as a society.

The final note on this installation, and on *A Festival of Form* itself, is that it may be played out as its own Cage-style performance. That is to say that the exhibit, participants, speakers, Cage and his music, Kyle Gann and his works, the audience, and everyone involved may be envisioned as a macrocosmic score: a piece of music with constant flow and organic *form*. The week of events, the speaking, discussing, listening, looking, mingling, eating, and overt human interactions on the SMU campus are themselves part of the infinite expression of the human. We invite you in to experience this unique event—a constant flow of notions, directions, and errors—hopefully good, holy, and rambunctious errors that make us all the more human, and all the more infinite.

SCHEDULE

DAY 1: Monday, March 7, 2022

Welcome to *A Festival of Form* at Bridwell Library, Blue Room

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 5:00PM | Light Refreshments |
| 5:30PM | Introductory Remarks: Dean Sam Holland
(SMU Meadows School of the Arts) and
Dean Holly Jeffcoat (SMU Libraries) |
| 5:45PM | Lecture: “Infinite Sound, Infinite Human: How
Form in Arts, Theology, and Music Strengthen our
Understanding of the World” by Anthony J. Elia |
| 6:15PM | Panel Discussion on John Cage and his Legacy by
SMU Faculty & Staff |
| 6:35PM | A Sonic Welcome to <i>A Festival of Form</i> with Dr.
Courtney Brown (“ <i>Hadrosaur Variations II</i> ” —
Homage to John Cage & the Dinosaur) |

DAY 2: Tuesday, March 8, 2022

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 6:00AM-10:00PM | Performance in Perkins Chapel of Organ ² /ASLSP
~“As Slow as Possible”
Dr. Christopher Anderson, organ |
|----------------|--|

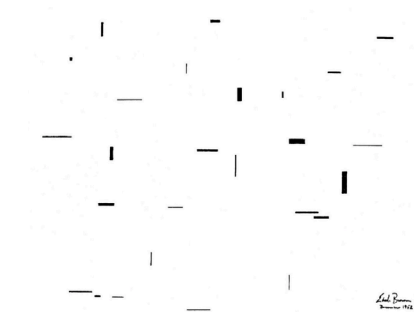
**This work will be performed continuously and will be open to the public beginning at 6AM. As it is comprised of both long intervals of sustained notes on the organ and short stretches of silence, visitors may enter the chapel and experience the sound (or its absence) within the space over those 16-hours. Student assistants will meet visitors at the entrance of the chapel and guide them to seats inside. We offer and recommend the use of blindfolds (which you may keep), in order to allow visitors to focus on the sound of the space only, but this is not required for entrance.*

DAY 3: Wednesday, March 9, 2022

- 1:00PM *Custer and Sitting Bull*, opera by Kyle Gann. Film screening in **Perkins Chapel** with Q&A with Mr. Gann to follow (Running time, approximately 35 minutes)
- 2:30–3:45PM Lecture: “John Cage in Dallas and Beyond” by Kyle Gann (1 hour + Q&A) **Bridwell Library, Blue Room**
- 3:45–4:00PM Break
- 4:00–4:30PM Microtonal Interlude: Two works by Kyle Gann
Performed by Anna Bulkina, piano
Echoes of Nothing & *Triskadekaphonia* for altered piano
Bridwell Library, Blue Room
- 4:30–5:00PM “Lecture on Nothing” by John Cage (Introductory Comments by Kyle Gann)
Performed by SMU Music students
Bridwell Library, Blue Room
- 5:00PM Reception & Exhibitions Viewing
Bridwell Library, Gill Hall
- 6:00PM Concert in **Perkins Chapel** ~ Cage & His Musical World: Ancestors, Cage, and Gann
(Program Schedule, see p. 8)

THEOLOGY & ART OF THE SCORE

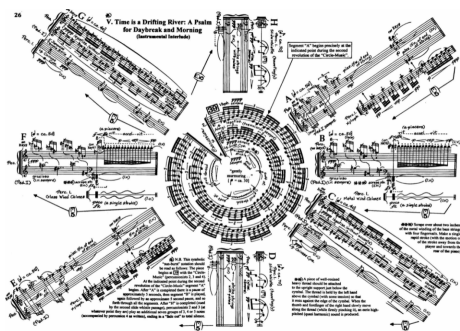
An Exhibit on Cage's Musical World



Theology and Art of the Score is an exhibit that comes out of various interdisciplinary projects that took place at Bridwell Library over the last year. During the *Dante Festival* in late August 2021, the musical work produced by composer Gabrielle Cerberville titled “the sky is falling” blended together elements of literature, history, theology, art, and music in a

provocative and unorthodox manner through the production of musical scores without notation or paper; instead she used acrylic paints on plexiglass. Out of the tradition of John Cage and later Earle Brown (1926-2002) and George Crumb (1929-2022), this form of composition and notation continues to bend historical ideas of form and push the limits of composition and the score. Brown advocated open form notation and is most known for his work *December 1952* (above), a graphic score of image rather than traditional staves and notes, while Crumb split apart and reassembled the notation system into particularly radical representations for interpretation and performance (below right).

During the Fall 2021 semester, Meadows music classes visited Bridwell Library to view various historical and modern representations of musical notation, scores, and metal printing blocks for printing sheet music. The lectures and discussions with students focused on how industrialization and technology facilitated the evolution of musical instruments (e.g. more metal in pianos), the growth of orchestras, and the experimentation with musical sound, silence, and noise at the same time that developments in printing technology were occurring. This also prompted us to question how emergent technologies affected what constituted not just experimentation, but a complete dismantling of forms, whereby music, art, literature, science, history, theology, and the world itself were being restructured down to their subatomic essences. At the start of the 20th century this included Schoenberg



and Stravinsky in music; Matisse and Picasso in art; Joyce and Woolf in literature; Einstein and Curie in science; Braudel in history and Tillich in theology. The world that people knew of in the early part of the last century was ruptured on all accounts during the First World War, and the succeeding 1920s onward left open a door to an infinite potential for form.

It is no surprise then that the current Bridwell *Symbiosis* exhibit begins with works of this period, around the time of the First World War, and that some of the works we will hear at the March 9th evening concert will feature music written between 1910 and 1930. In the process of working with students and discussing with colleagues these various themes, it became apparent that by contending with ideas of *form* we were able to be more critically engaged in the work of a university and its parts. And this is no more present in Bridwell Library, where the elements of theology on a grand scale transcend any divisional category or discipline. Theology, therefore, becomes the fluid, organic, and holistic realm of *all* arts, a category with and without classifications, because it is meant to be the fullness of human expression—at least for those engaged in its systems of belief!

To be clear, many of those composers and writers and artists featured in both the *Symbiosis* exhibit and the *Theology and Art of the Score* exhibit were neither religious nor theological. But their works provide vision and opportunity for the many students, scholars, clergy, and lay people seeking higher meaning in their quotidian practices and spiritual lives. The *Art* portion of ...*Art of the Score* signals the variegated creativity that each of these composers has offered, some more modestly than others. Yet, each enlivens the notion of what constitutes the process of development, writing, and artistic execution in writing music and the score itself. Overall, *Theology and Art of the Score* is meant to be an exercise of participation, where people today can come together and experience the notions of form that spread across the narratives of time and space, of color and style, and of context and realities—all of which may give us slight hints or forceful suggestions that the worlds we live in are not always clear and what we expect, but instead full of ambiguity and uncertainty.

NOTES ON ITEMS IN EXHIBIT

The works in the exhibit *Theology and Art of the Score* represent primary sources related to John Cage and his world. Works include letters and ephemera by some of Cage's influences and teachers, such as Igor Stravinsky, Henry Cowell, Arnold Schoenberg, and Lazare Lévy, acquired by Bridwell for this event. Selections of writings and drawings by Cage are on display, as well as a chamber (slide) opera by Dave Jones and William Kent, which is a pivot between the avant-garde notions of early and mid-20th century modernist music and its contemporary movements represented in the artist books found in our major Bridwell exhibit *Symbiosis of Script, Font, and Form* (located in the adjacent Prothro Galleries).

*NUMBERED ITEMS BELOW CORRESPOND TO
NUMBERS IN DISPLAY CASES

ENTRY HALL

(1) **Dave Jones.** (1926–1996) & **William Kent.** (1919–2012). *The Philistine Traveler: Slide Opera* - Signed.

The idea of the score in 20th century music began to possess new characteristics, expressions, and dimensions, where composers sought to stress the traditional boundaries of what constituted that physical space of paper, ink, and/or graphite we know of as the manuscript score. In the early 1950s, the creative minds of Dave Jones and William Kent collaborated on a project to write a *slide opera*—a work written for a popular technology of the time: the slide projector. The intent of the work as described in the preface reads: “Poems set to Music and presented simultaneously in an Ordered Manner with Paintings: the latter projected on a Screen by means of Kodachrome Slides and the former recorded on Tape, or L.P. record.” The Jones and Kent chamber opera expresses not only evolving approaches to inventive score writing but exemplifies an expression of creative form in the artist book, as we see in the *Symbiosis* exhibit. *The Philistine Traveler* then is a fulcrum in that world of both artist book and score, challenging the limits of what constitutes *form* in realms of art and music alike.

(2) **Dorrance Stalvey.** *Changes: Piano Solo*, 1966.

American composer born in South Carolina, Dorrance Stalvey studied clarinet at the Cincinnati College of Music in the early 1950s. His early attractions were to jazz and continued with a versatile and wide-ranging career in music,

radio, and conducting. His score from 1966 featured in this exhibition is a new addition to the Bridwell Collections, and is an example of dynamic score expression at mid-century. The cover of *Changes* is shown in the display with its intriguing rectilinear design, which mirrors some of the notations in the score itself.

(3) **Kyle Gann.** *Liquid Mechanisms*, 2016.

Artist-in-residence, composer, and scholar Kyle Gann was born in Dallas, but lived for many years in the New York region. His prolific output covers a variety of genres and styles, but his microtonal works are particularly noteworthy. For this exhibit, we have an example of these types of works in his *Liquid Mechanisms: for three retuned, computer-driven pianos* from 2016. The work is part of his monumental *Hyperchromatica*. The visual design and appearance of the score provides both a setting list of alternative tuning cues and an aesthetic design in its writing. As the composer himself describes the work: “*Liquid Mechanisms* is a moment form, a series of panels in a mural. Every section employs notes, chords, or phrases moving at different tempos and going out of phase, with a nonsynchronicity that I think of as a watery feeling of time. The rhythmic character is like that of *Neptune Night* but while that piece was resolutely tonal, this one aims at polytonality in every section. Within each panel, I think, is enough repetition of elements to begin to hear each set of complex relationships as a whole.”

RECEPTION/GILL HALL

Left Case

(4) **Igor Stravinsky.** (1882–1971). *Autograph Signature with Photograph*. n.d.

Igor Stravinsky is arguably the most famous and influential of early twentieth century composers. His works *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring* were all highly influential to the development of modern music, though it was the last of these which has taken on a mythical status as supposedly “causing a riot” at its premiere and has been written about by critics for more than a century. John Cage’s teacher in Paris, Lazare Lévy, encouraged the young composer to study the works of Stravinsky. Curiously, decades later, when Cage had begun to establish himself, Stravinsky became acquainted with the younger man’s work. According to one account, when Stravinsky “experienced” Cage’s 4’33” he responded with measured disdain quipping “I only hope his silences will become longer!”

(5) **Henry Cowell.** (1897–1965). *Two Typed Letters Signed to Peter Pindar Stearns*, 1955-6.

Born in Menlo Park, CA at the end of the nineteenth century, Henry Dixon Cowell came from a family where art and music were central to daily life. Despite his parents' divorce when he was just six years old, they cultivated a creatively rich space for Henry to explore and grow. His mother, Clarissa Belnap Dixon Cowell (1851-1916), was an influential feminist advocate, labor rights supporter, activist, and novelist; his father, who had come from Ireland, had drawn the young Henry into the wealth of traditional Irish music, which is reflected in many of the son's musical compositions. Today, along with his ground-breaking works from the 1920s (including *The Banshee* and *The Voice of Lir*), he is best-known for his mentorship of John Cage, who called Cowell "the open sesame for new music in America." Cage's inventive approach to "prepared piano" has its antecedent in Cowell's techniques of directing performers to play piano strings instead of or in addition to piano keys. Peter Pindar Stearns (1931–2016), to whom these letters are addressed, was the son of composer Theodore Stearns (1881–1935), and was himself a composer, organist, and professor at Mannes School of Music.

(6) **Lazare Lévy.** (1882-1964). *Letter to Undetermined Addressee in Buenos Aires, Argentina*, 1929.

Lazare Lévy was a virtuoso pianist, composer, and teacher at the Paris Conservatoire specializing in piano pedagogy (co-authoring the work *Méthode Supérieure de Piano* as Louis Diemer's assistant). Though obscure to today's audiences, a century ago he was a preeminent performer and known for his organ and piano works and recitals. While his output was admirable, these works are difficult to find in the twenty-first century. His connection to John Cage is notable, in that Lévy encouraged the young Cage to explore the music of Stravinsky, Hindemith, Bach, and others. Cage had recently dropped out of Pomona College (Claremont, California) in 1930, hitchhiked to Galveston, Texas and took a boat to Le Havre in the north of France. From there Cage spent the next eighteen months exploring Europe and participating in the arts and music scene, including time studying under Lévy at the Paris Conservatoire. The letter on display is from Lévy to an undetermined addressee living in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1929.

(7) **Arnold Schoenberg.** (1874-1951) *Letter to M. Pierre Aelberts on structural functions of harmony*, May 6, 1948.

Arnold Schoenberg was among the luminaries of twentieth-century music, most notable for his twelve-tone system that he articulated in the early 1920s.

Another lesser-known 12-tone system devised a few years earlier by the Austrian theorist and composer Josef Matthias Hauer (1883-1959) reflects the mood of musical experimentation of the time. Approaches by composers like Hauer and Schoenberg demonstrate how the concepts of music, notation, scores, instrumentation, and sound were being articulated, engaged, democratized, and dismantled in radical new ways. Cage studied with Schoenberg for two years (1935-1937) and wrestled with the elder composer's pedagogy on harmony. The letter in this exhibit is to the Belgian publisher Pierre Aelberts (1899-1983), in which Schoenberg discusses his unpublished work "Structural Functions of the Harmony," along with inquiries about the composer's short foreword to the music of Webern and Berg.

(8) **Leo Ornstein.** (1895–2002). *Correspondence Archive to Harry Brunswick Loeb*, 1921.

Leo Ornstein is not a household name today, but his influence on early twentieth century avant-garde music is significant. Born into a traditional Jewish household in Kremenchuk, Ukraine in 1895, he learned music early on from his father and uncle, a cantor and violinist, respectively. Ornstein's talent on the piano brought him to the attention of famed pianists and composers of the day, including Josef Hofmann and Alexander Glazunov, eventually leading to his admission at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. The young pianist and his family emigrated to the United States in 1906 due to rising anti-Semitism and pogroms in Ukraine. Around the time Stravinsky was making waves with his own music, Ornstein performed modernist ("futurist") works by Schoenberg and himself in London in 1914. *Danse Sauvage* ("Wild Man's Dance") and *Suicide in an Airplane* are his most notable works, dating from 1913-14 to 1919, and included intense, harsh, terrorizing tone clusters that made audiences deeply uncomfortable. *Suicide in an Airplane* inspired the French composer George Antheil to write his *Airplane Sonata* a few years later in 1923. Ornstein continued composing throughout his extremely long life, though did not seek an active public career. He was "rediscovered" in the 1970s, living part-time in a Texas trailer park with his wife. He continued to write into his late 90s and died at around 108 years of age (his exact age has been a question of debate). While it is not believed that he had any direct connection to Cage, Ornstein's work is a significant example of early modernism among the antecedents of Cage in the United States. The collection of letters here in Bridwell are from Ornstein to Harry Brunswick Loeb (1878-1957), the distinguished New Orleans music critic, who wrote about the early opera history in that city.

Among many of John Cage's works we find drawings of both art and musical representation, but as we consider more closely the composer's approaches to form, some of the questions we are forced to ask are *what is a score? what is art? what is music? do art and music require performance to exist or be alive? And how does the concept of form bridge these ideas of time and space?* Nearly every written articulation of Cage's work in this exhibit possesses some unique flourish by the composer that prompts us as viewers to question both Cage's intentions and the limitless capacity to be creative as human beings.

(9) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Empty Words: Writings '73—'74.*

Signed copy of Cage's important collection of musical and artistic essays, poems, and mesostics, dating from the 1970s. The book was published in 1979 by Wesleyan University Press.

(10) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Variations I.*

Many copies of this black and white portrait of John Cage have been made along with some signed placard situated below in a black frame. Bridwell holds two of these in our collections—one with a white index card signed by Cage and this unique drawing, which by many accounts could be called "an original score." The crossing lines and dots evoke the dismantled *form* of traditional musical notation and a glimpse at the chaotic uncertainty and unpredictability of new *form*.

(11) **Karlheinz Stockhausen.** (1928-2007) *Eigenhändige Postkarte mit Unterschrift* [Handwritten postcard with signature]. *Sketch of Stockhausen's Die zehn wichtigsten Wörter* ("The Ten Most Important Words") Christmas 1991.

Born in Mödrath, Germany during the Weimar Republic, Karlheinz Stockhausen became one of the most prominent avant-garde composers in the 20th century. Like Cage, he tested the recognized boundaries of music by experimenting with space, chance, and electronics to create bold new forms. One of Stockhausen's most ambitious and incredible pieces was his *Helikopter-Streichquartett* ("Helicopter String Quartet"), where members of a string quartet performed independently in four hovering helicopters near a concert hall. This music here is made in the shape of a Christmas tree for a holiday card. Written in German to Fritz Hennenberg (b. 1932, German musicologist) it reads in English: "What a surprise: Thank you very much for your words! Perhaps you will recognize that my musical soul is a small

mirror of GOD. One work follows the other—learning, joy.” Stockhausen’s Christmas card “score” was acquired for the current exhibit.

(12) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles.* 1981.

Described as “a book of dialogue,” *For the Birds* is a work of essays, conversations, and ruminations by John Cage in discussion with French musicologist and philosopher Daniel Paul Charles (1935-2008), originally published in French as *Pour les oiseaux*. The intellectual and musical debates in the book illuminate the grand visual mindscape of *form* that Cage was interested in. Cage’s “Sixty Answers to Thirty-Three Questions from Daniel Charles” beginning on p. 15 of this book is demonstrative of the typographic and avant-garde artistic designs we see in the *Symbiosis* exhibit adjacent to this display. Daniel met Cage in 1958 and continued their collaborations for many years. This book is of particular interest for its inscription by Cage reading: “for you, dear Marion” followed by Cage writing his signature six times over each preceding signature and then in parentheses noting “(the first sextuple).” Is this a score? A musical notation? What does it say about *form*? The “Marion” is presumed to be his friend Dr. Marion North, who was a major exponent of 20th century contemporary dance and colleague of Cage’s partner Merce Cunningham (1919-2009).

(13) **John Cage.** (1912-1992) and **Pierre Boulez** (1925-2016). *Correspondence et Documents.* 2002.

John Cage and Pierre Boulez shared many insights about the musical dramas of 20th century music. Between 1954 and 1973, Boulez establish a Parisian concert society called *Domaine musical*, which performed new works by up-and-coming composers and established notables like Karlheinz Stockhausen, Gilles Tremblay, Olivier Messiaen, and John Cage. The letters and documents in the present volume explore both the commonalities and differences of each of these composers and present the reader with a front row seat to the evolving nature of 20th century music and its experimental notions of form.

Right Case

(14) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *A John Cage Reader: In Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday.* 1983.

A celebratory volume of interviews, essays, and articles edited by Peter Gena, Jonathan Brent, and Don Gillespie.

(15) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Electronic Music: Luciano Berio, John Cage, and İlhan Mimaroglu.* 1967.

This 1967 collaboration of three avant-garde composers explores the varieties of musical form in the area of electronic sound and the French-inspired *musique concrète* that began in the late 1920s with critic André Cœuroy's suggestion that gramophones be used as distinct instruments. İlhan Mimaroglu (1926-2012) was a Turkish American composer, who employed multiple techniques in creating sound forms and was especially notable for his use of magnetic tape. Luciana Berio (1925-2003) was a groundbreaking composer in electronic forms, indeterminacy, and vocal recitations, who regularly utilized "extended techniques"—or, unorthodox playing of an instrument—in his compositions. For both of these men, *form* played a significant role in the construction and evolution of contemporary music. Their collaboration with Cage on this recording shows the far reaching work that was being done mid-century by Cage and the musical revolution of form that he helped usher into our modern world. The record cover is signed by Cage and acquired by Bridwell for this exhibit.

(16) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Memo from John Cage to Marc Dachy,* March 16, 1986.

Many "Message-Reply" forms produced by the Wheeler Group, Inc. appear to survive with Cage's notes on them. The one that was recently acquired for this exhibit is of particular interest to Bridwell, as it is a thank you note from Cage to French translator and historian Marc Dachy (1952-2015). Dachy translated some of Cage's works into French and was a specialist in the Dada movement. In the note, Cage acknowledges a gift of a book on typography—a signature area of specialty (along with historical printing) at Bridwell Library.

(17) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *High Performance* magazine, #38 (Volume 10, Number 2). 1987.

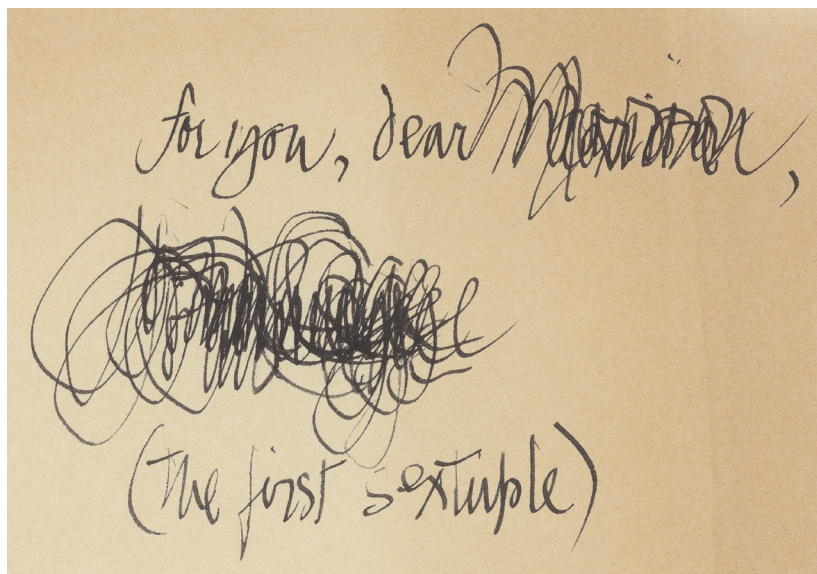
High Performance was an arts and music magazine that lasted for nearly two decades between 1978 and 1997, which featured and supported new works and lesser-known artists. For one of its 1987 issues, John Cage was on both the cover and in the magazine with a ten-page piece in celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday. The exhibition copy is signed by Cage with a silver-ink pen.

(18) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Postcard Facsimile*. Signed by Cage. n.d.

Cage was an exceedingly productive and prolific creator. Among his many works were sketches, watercolors, pencil drawings, and more. In this example, we have a facsimile of one of his drawings, which he signed in the lower right corner.

(19) **John Cage.** (1912-1992). *Visual Art: To Sober and Quiet the Mind*. 2001.

First published in 2001, author Kathan Brown explores the visual, musical, and artistic attributes that Cage employed in his works. Divided into several parts, section two provides examples, illustrations, and descriptions of Cage's elaborate and complex scores, including how chance operations were integrated into his creative process and manuscript writing. Other sections include art made by Cage.



Above: John Cage's signature written six times from item (12) in this exhibit: *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles*. 1981.

CAGE & HIS MUSICAL WORLD

A Concert of 20th & 21st Century Works

Perkins Chapel, March 9, 2022 ~ 6PM

Anna Bulkina, *piano*

Dana Sudborough, *vibraphone*

Kamilya Akhmetova, *organ*

Brice Smith, Jennifer Wheeler, Tracie Kaip,

Johanna Rohler, Michelle Pokley, *flutes*

Brent Buemi, *clarinet*

Mark Landson, *violin*

Patricio Andrés Gutiérrez Vielma, *cello*

Anthony J. Elia, *water & such*

Introductory Video Montage

PART I: Ancestors

Arnold Schoenberg, *Sechs kleine klavierstücke*, 1913

Leo Ornstein, *Suicide in an Airplane*, 1918-19

Igor Stravinsky, *Rag-Dance-Music*, 1919

Henry Cowell, *Three Irish Legends*, 1922

George Antheil, *Piano Sonata No. 2 "The Airplane,"* 1923

Lazare Lévy, *Berceuse*, 1955

Short Break

PART II: John Cage

Three Pieces for Two Flutes, 1935

In a Landscape for Piano, 1948

4'33", 1952

Dream for Vibraphone, 1948

INTERMEZZO: George Brecht, *Drip Music*, 1959

Part III: Kyle Gann

Siren for Five Flutes, 1978

Summer Serenade for Organ, 2014

Olana for Vibraphone, 2007

Kierkegaard, Walking for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, 2007

PROGRAM NOTES

Cage and His Musical World: A Concert of 20th & 21st Century Works

Closing out *A Festival of Form: John Cage & the Infinite Human* will be this concert of works relating to John Cage and his musical world. Works on this program include antecedent influences, teachers, Cage himself, and the work of our artist-in-residence, Dr. Kyle Gann. Part I is comprised of works by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Ornstein, Antheil, Cowell, and Lévy. While not complete in any sense, these works each convey a slice of the early 20th century, into which Cage was born in 1912. Some of these composers influenced his ways of seeing the world and understanding the complexities and infinities of music. Part II will explore some of Cage's chamber and solo works and flow into Part III, where we will end the concert with works by Cage scholar and composer Kyle Gann. Some of these works were chosen to express the artistic textures and relief of contemporary music in relation to Cage's legacy and long impression on classical and other music into the 21st century. The concert will begin with a video montage showing a range of new sonority in the history of 20th century music. We hope you enjoy.

PART I: Ancestors

Arnold Schoenberg, *Sechs kleine klavierstücke*, 1911-13

Sechs kleine klavierstücke (or, "Six Small Piano Pieces") are more like "piano bits." Schoenberg's approach to twelve-tone composition was one of the most fundamental and radical reinterpretations of form in the history of music. These exceedingly short, sparse, and miniature pieces are all at once colorful, haunting, meditative, mournful, and even perplexing, but they encourage the listener to consider the limitlessness of musical form in its most atomic and infinitesimal structure. The last of these pieces is a homage to Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), who was highly respected among the modernist crowd.

Igor Stravinsky, *Rag-Dance-Music*, 1919

Stravinsky's *Rag-Dance-Music* takes on jazz and ragtime forms based on works he encountered in the 1910s. The Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet (1883-1969) is said to have gathered a package of "ragtime music in the form of piano reductions and instrumental parts" and given them to Stravinsky shortly after a trip he took with the *Ballets Russes* to the United States in 1918. The composer studied and heard this new American musical milieu and crafted his own form out of that encounter. While Stravinsky's *Rag-Dance-Music* has almost no resemblance to the most famous ragtime composer Scott Joplin's

(born in Texas, 1868-1917) works, the result is a curious blend of elements that the Russian master had been experimenting with already for a decade. The original work of *Rag-Dance-Music* appeared in Stravinsky's theatrical work *L'Histoire du soldat* in 1918. The piano version is subtle, energetic, and nuanced. And if you listen carefully you may get a sense of its play on American jazz and ragtime forms.

Leo Ornstein, *Suicide in an Airplane*, 1918-19

The clustered intensity and insanity of Ornstein's post-WWI *Suicide in an Airplane* is both dramatic and angst-ridden. It pulses and vibrates the pianist and audience alike, shaking the frame of the piano and the airwaves surrounding the concert space so that one wonders when the continual tensions of this mechanical, industrial-sounding technology will be resolved. The work ends in a tapering reduction of that tension, fading off into a quadruple pianissimo. The work is meant to evoke and emulate the vibratory action of early airplane engines and the motion of flight. Ornstein's earlier work *Danse Sauvage* (1913-14) was a precursor of similar style, but was deselected from this program in order to prevent further violence against the beloved Steinway.

Henry Cowell, *Three Irish Legends*, 1917-1922

The Irish legends referred to in these pieces include *The Tides of Manaunaun*, *Hero Sun*, and *The Voice of Lir*. The first version of these was written by Cowell as a prelude to the chamber opera *The Building of Bamba* in 1917. According to Cowell "Manaunaun was the god of motion, and long before Creation, he sent forth tremendous tides, which swept to and fro through the universe, and rhythmically moved the particles and materials of which the gods were later to make the suns and worlds." In these three compositions, we hear the dramatic resonance of those myths in Cowell's technique of writing tone clusters (i.e. a chord of at least three, but usually more, adjacent tones in a scale). Cowell was experimenting with similar notation and composition as Ornstein during the late 1910s and early 1920s. The "Explanation of Symbols" that prefaces the *Three Irish Legends* includes instructions for the pianist to play the tone clusters "either with the flat of the hand, or with the forearm or with the fist, according to the length of the cluster." The works are deeply profound and often agonizing pieces that do well in representing the "god of motion" that Cowell describes when looking upon those ancient legends.

George Antheil, *Piano Sonata No. 2 "The Airplane,"* 1923

The work of composer George Antheil is often lively, engaging, and full of joie de vivre. The present work is a selection from his Piano Sonata No.

2 “The Airplane,” and emotes some of the similar agility, angularity, and impulsiveness found in the other composers on this program from the 1910s and 1920s. Though scholars and critics have noted the connection between Antheil’s *Airplane Sonata* No. 2 and Ornstein’s *Suicide in an Airplane*, the works are quite distinct, with Antheil’s possessing far more lyricism than his contemporary Ornstein. That said, a colorful cantabile sonority should not fool us into thinking the piece is a calming meditation, as it has its own very real movements of violent agitation that make us wonder what’s actually happening to that biplane that Antheil was imagining. A curious SMU connection to this work and its composer is that in 1946 Stanley Marcus commissioned a piece of music to accompany a gala affair in Dallas. The commission was asked of George Antheil who composed a lovely suite for solo piano called *Carnival of the Beautiful Dresses*. Amazingly, a recording of this work played continuously during the recent DeGolyer Library exhibit *An Eye for Elegance: Carrie Marcus Neiman and the Women Who Shaped Neiman Marcus*. Along with the recording at the exhibit, a facsimile of the Antheil manuscript was on display and noticed by a Bridwell staff who made the connection to Antheil’s music in this concert here in Perkins Chapel.

Lazare Lévy, *Berceuse*, 1955

As one of Cage’s major influences and teachers in Paris, Lazare Lévy (1882-1964) encouraged the young composer to explore various forms of both baroque contrapuntal music, especially Bach, and more contemporary composers like Stravinsky. Lévy was a renowned piano pedagogue, composer, pianist, and organist, and wrote a variety of works. Few recordings remain of his illustrious and rich performance career, and little has been written of his life. Bridwell Library acquired a manuscript letter that he wrote to an unidentified person in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which is addressed to someone close to him as indicated by its salutation. The *Berceuse* for piano is a later work that is sweet, contemplative, and refined (perhaps even saccharine)—very different in style, form, and manner from most of the other works on this program. Lévy’s published works are extremely rare and hard to acquire. (Many thanks to the staff of Hamon Arts Library for purchasing this item all the way from France for this concert!) Upon receipt, the score revealed another interesting clue about the international flavor of not just Lévy’s world, but the interconnectivity that he had with students from the North America, Europe, and Asia. The *Berceuse* was dedicated “Pour KAZU YASUKAWA” who was a renowned Japanese pianist and friend of Lévy. Another Japanese composer, who was much younger, named Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996) became close to Cage after the latter’s visit to Japan in 1962. Cage and Takemitsu connected on the history, poetry, and traditional music of Japan, as well as a shared interest in Zen Buddhism. The connection back to Lévy was not just through Cage—

who would become one of Lévy's most famous students—but through an odd twist of fate: Takemitsu rented one of the famous Pleyel pianos in Japan that the elder pianist Kazu Yasukawa transported from France years earlier.

PART II: John Cage

Three Pieces for Two Flutes, 1935

An early work by Cage, written in his twenties, these *Three Pieces for Two Flutes* are short studies in chromatic writing. His compositions for flute cover a range of styles and textures over the years, especially as he became more interested in Zen Buddhism and meditation. His later work *Ryōan-ji* (1984) incorporates percussion and pre-recorded flutes and was inspired in part by Cage's visit to the namesake Zen temple and garden in Kyoto, Japan. The pieces for this performance are delicate and contrasting, while also harmonically complex and layered with lyricism and moments of dissonance, eventuating in a subtle conclusion.

In a Landscape for Piano, 1948

This 10-minute piano piece from 1948 opens with a calming meditative ascension of sound. For the listener, one may consider a certain minimalism of the work without succumbing to monotony. But our experiences should be more intimated and reflect upon the deeper meaning of this piece, which must be seen in the light of not just sound, but in the human forms of motion. Cage wrote the work for Louise Lippold to accompany a choreography of dance. Upon listening to recordings of this piece without the knowledge that the work is connected to the kinesthetics and arc of dance, one might have a very different sense of the listening encounter. If we are to close our eyes and dream or imagine a fluid motion of human movement, though, as Cage's tonal subtleties are played, we will experience something more in line with what Cage was likely hoping to achieve. The notations for the work include footnoted directions, such as "Rhythmic structure = 15 x 15 (5. 7. 3.), which tell the pianist to conceptualize the repetition in more fluid, long-viewed, and flowing form, adding nuance and delicacy throughout the work.

4'33", 1952

4'33" ("Four minutes and thirty-three seconds") is arguably Cage's most iconic work. The piece is in three movements and involves an "unorthodox" set of instructions for the performer that will likely perplex members of the audience, who have either never heard of this piece or do not know what to expect from it. There have been a range of variations made of *4'33"*—including for

orchestras and rock bands—but the work is for piano here. The performance for this concert may have some nuanced variation, but that will be determined right before the concert. Part of the issue and concern for the organizers of this festival is to provide a distinct and fresh approach to the piece without falling into gimmickry—a relatively modern word whose etymology is supposed to come from and be an anagram of “magic” in the early 20th century. Then again, maybe what ends up happening during 4’33” is some sort of “magic,” a spell of confusion and sorcery that confounds our expectations and leads us to some unexpected place, lured by both the composer and the performer to another realm. Our guest artist Dr. Gann is a noted Cage scholar and wrote an esteemed volume on this work titled *No Such Thing as Silence: John Cage’s 4’33”* (Yale University Press, 2011). Without giving away the “secret sauce” of Cage’s 4’33” for the uninitiated *before* the performance, what we can say is that much of what you’ll both *hear* and *not hear* are equal actors in the performative space of the concert. So if you cough, sniffle, or chuckle in discomfort, be forewarned: you too are part of the score!

Dream for Vibraphone, 1948

Written the same year as *In a Landscape*, the present work for vibraphone was composed in a similar mode of that piano piece and specifically for his partner Merce Cunningham’s choreographed dance. As Cage became more immersed in exploring tonality and the expansiveness of sound in other cultural milieus, his music followed new distinct lines of expression and form. *Dream* is constructed out of a tradition of Balinese percussive instruments, like metallophones, gangsas, and gamelans, which Cage was exposed to in the 1940s, along with his increasing interest in Zen Buddhism and the study of the *I Ching*. The piece is nuanced and flows across the spaces where it is performed, much like Gann’s *Olana*, also featured in this concert.

INTERMEZZO: George Brecht, *Drip Music*, 1959

John Cage composed and premiered his *Water Music* in 1952. The piece in the form of a large score on a poster board directs a pianist to use whistles, a deck of cards, a radio, and water containers to create precisely timed soundings. A student of Cage at the New School named George Brecht (1926-2008) found great inspiration in the elder composer and his methods. *Drip Music* is a conceptual piece that plays with notions of “liquid sound,” specifically the pouring of water into an empty receptacle.

PART III: Kyle Gann

Siren for Five Flutes, 1978

The legacies of early and mid-20th century composers like Cage include new notions of not simply composition, but also performance. In Gann's *Siren* we find the sublimity of form and sound unite in the particularity of space, which provides a distinct expression for the performers and audience. Because the arrangement is purposely articulated to encircle listeners, we are treated to a new way of perceiving our soundscapes. As Gann writes of the piece: "One of the pleasures we learned from the tape-delay and phase-shifting pieces of the 1960s was that of hearing echoes among multiples of the same instrument. An immense repertoire of such works has been created since then; Lois Vierk and Julius Eastman are among the composers whose careers pointed in that direction. My contribution, inspired by the same impulses they were, amounted to *Siren* for five flutes (1978) and *Long Night* for three pianos (1980-81), both written while I was in graduate school at Northwestern. In *Siren*, five flutes surround a performance space and, only roughly synchronized, perform slightly differing versions of more or less the same melody. Variations in the notated rhythm jostle with variations in human playing speed to create accidental unisons and echo distances."

Summer Serenade for Organ, 2014

Gann's *Summer Serenade* is a beautiful work of contemplation that carries the listener through sustained and imaginative spaces, bending time in its unrestrained simplicity. The organ, as an instrument, may conjure up preconceived notions of "churchiness" or antique memories of our youthful liturgies, while for some the sounding pipes convey something altogether different—like seashores, mountains, and other natural terrains. Gann's work is subtle, sustaining, and powerful in its duration and will likely unleash a cloud of imaginative dreams. Gann himself has written of the piece: "I had owed composer/organist Gerhard Staebler an organ piece for thirty years. Whenever I tried to write for the damn thing, it just didn't work out. But then Carson Cooman e-mailed me one day suggesting I write one for him. He wrote, 'For some time, I've imagined broadly in my mind an extremely nice Gannian organ piece in your quiet, beautiful, tranquil/gentle vein. No particularly significant dynamic or timbre change, but just happening.' It was the perfect thing to say. I had just had my hands on the piano playing the lovely chord that ends my Catskill Set, and I instantly realized it was voiced perfectly to sound good on the organ, and that the pedals (taking the lowest, almost unreachable note) would free up the hands for some subtle counterpoint. From that moment I could hardly pause until I finished the piece. Technically speaking, the piece

follows a paradigm I invented for myself that I call ‘relenting minimalism.’ That is, the bulk of the piece is rather austere static, but after it exhausts its various possibilities the music relents and begins to release a tune that seemed to have been implicit all along.”

Olana for Vibraphone, 2007

Of his work *Olana*, Gann writes: “I have been going through a phase of naming pieces after the places I conceived them in, and percussionist Kerry O’Brien convinced me to write a vibraphone piece for her friend Andy Bliss on the day we visited Olana, the estate of the Hudson Valley Painter Frederic Church. The piece does little more than try to capture and sustain a mood.” The work is meditative and haunting, and for those who have lived in the Hudson Valley or upstate New York, the piece may resonate with the contemporary evocations of that place, where the Hudson River School of painting began. In 1872, Frederic Church built his home two miles from where the late Thomas Cole (1801-1848) lived—on opposite sides of the Hudson. Late in 2021, while driving through the Berkshires of western Massachusetts during a heavy fog, Bridwell Director Anthony Elia listened to Gann’s *Olana* for the first time and felt the work had a special sonority and resonance that hearkened back to prior ages. Coincidentally, Mr. Elia, who has long enjoyed visiting the Olana state park when traveling to New York, owns a folk art painting of Olana that hangs in his home here in Dallas.

Kierkegaard, Walking for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, 2007

We end the concert with this wonderful chamber work by Gann, which by all accounts is a suitable conclusion to a festival of form, music, and theology. After all, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was one of the most significant and influential theologians of the last two-hundred years, and performing a work named after such a notable philosophical mind, in the space of a chapel, at a Christian theological school seems rightly placed. Though Kierkegaard came from the Lutheran (and not Methodist) tradition, his theological works and legacy transcend denominationalism and give us much to debate nearly two centuries on. (Cage’s grandfather was an itinerant Methodist Episcopal minister, but the extent to which he possessed any such connection to the Methodist Church very likely ends there.) Gann’s remarks on his piece are particular salient and insightful. He writes “While Kierkegaard’s books had a potent, if subtle, impact on my early intellectual life, I admit that when I began *Kierkegaard, Walking*, I didn’t have him in mind. But I was thinking about walking, and I had an upcoming trip to Copenhagen on the horizon, with the intention of retracing Kierkegaard’s steps. I was trying to think up images that had to do with meandering through mental or spiritual fields, while

reading Joakim Garff's excellent biography of the philosopher, and it finally dawned on me that Kierkegaard wandering endlessly through Copenhagen, talking to everyone he met and working out his dialectic with or without an accompanying audience, was the image I needed. There are even passages where the aesthetic (or time-based) is contrasted with the eternal (repetitive), as in *Either/Or*. But it would be stretching things to connect *Kierkegaard, Walking* too closely with the content of the philosopher's writing: it is more the biographical image, the peripatetic philosopher in constant motion while musing *sub specie aeternitatis*, "from the standpoint of eternity." I managed to complete the first draft in Copenhagen, then tinkered with it a little more in Amsterdam."

March 7th Performance @6:35PM, Bridwell Library

Courtney Brown. *Hadrosaur Variations II*, a structured improvisation for Rawr!, soprano, and laptop. The *Phoenix New Times* described an earlier use of Dr. Brown's employment of "fossils, CT scans, and 3D printing" as something mind blowing. Brown's adaptation of a recreated "*Corythosaurus* dinosaur skull and nasal passages, with a mechanical larynx that performers blow into to approximate the sound the animal made" is a remarkable and unforgettable experience. Her present piece was fashioned to be performed for the present event. The composer will also play the piece.

March 9th Recital @4PM, Bridwell Library

Kyle Gann. *Echoes of Nothing* (2011) is a piece for virtual retuned piano with 30 pitches to the octave. The title refers to a statement in John Cage's book *Silence*: "Every something is an echo of nothing." The two movements, "Nothing" and "Something," use the same tuning. "Nothing" is a meditation on gentle emptiness; "Something" is kind of a fast piano boogie that regroups the first movement's chord progressions into more rhythmically familiar configurations. This "Something" is truly an echo of "Nothing." *Triskaidekaphonia* (2005) is a piece for virtual electronic piano, i.e., electric keyboard that sounds like a piano. Unlike my earlier microtonal works, this one can be performed live by a soloist, without additional electronics. The tuning is superlatively simple: it consists of merely all the ratios formed by the whole numbers from 1 to 13, of which there are 29...Performed by **Anna Bulkina**.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Dr. Kyle Gann (b. 1955 in Dallas, Texas; above left) is a composer and the author of seven books on American music, including books on microtonality, Charles Ives's *Concord Sonata*, John Cage's *4'33"*, Conlon Nancarrow, and Robert Ashley. He studied composition with Ben Johnston, Morton Feldman, and Peter Gena, and about a fourth of his music is microtonal. His major works include the piano concerto *Sunken City*, *Transcendental Sonnets* for chorus and orchestra, the microtonal music theater piece *Custer and Sitting Bull*, *The Planets* for mixed octet, and *Hyperchromatica* for three retuned, computer-driven pianos. His music is available on the New Albion, New World, Cold Blue, Lovely Music, Mode, Other Minds, Meyer Media, Innova, New Tone, Microfest, Vous Ne Revez Pas Encore, Brilliant Classics, and Monroe Street labels.

Dr. Christopher Anderson (above right) is Associate Professor of Sacred Music at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, where he teaches graduate courses in history and theory in the Perkins School of Theology and the Meadows School of the Arts. Anderson is a scholar and organist whose work has centered on early musical modernism, modern German history and philosophy, the organ's position in Western culture, and the composer Max Reger. His latest book is a monumental biographic study titled *Karl Straube (1873-1950): Germany's Master Organist in Turbulent Times*, published by University of Rochester Press, and released next month, April 2022.

Anna Bulkina (above center) graduated from the Sergei Rachmaninoff Conservatory under Professor Rimma Skorokhodova in 2008, and came to the United States to continue her study at Texas Christian University on the Lili Kraus Scholarship with Dr. Tamas Ungar. In 2013 Anna graduated from her Master Degree at TCU. She is a current DMA student at UNT College of Music under the guidance of Dr. Pamela Paul. Additionally she studied with Boris Petrushansky at the acclaimed Imola Piano Academy "Incontri col Maestro" in Italy. Ms. Bulkina was top winner of the Busoni International Piano Competition in 2011 and has performed internationally as concerto soloist.

Dr. Courtney Brown is a composer, performer, tango dancer, software developer, and assistant professor of Creative Computation at SMU. She creates new musical interfaces in which the act of creating sound is transformative in some way. People become dinosaurs by blowing into a hadrosaur skull, creating their own roar. Social dancers become musical ensembles. Dr. Brown received a Fulbright Fellowship to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she began work on her ongoing project, *Interactive Tango Milonga*, creating interactive Argentine tango dance. She is a graduate of Dartmouth's Electro-Acoustic Master's Program and holds a B.S. in Music (concentration in soprano voice) and Computer Science from Loyola University New Orleans. Her doctorate is from Arizona State University, Tempe, in Interdisciplinary Digital Media and Performance.

Kamilya Akhmetova was born in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan. She started playing the piano when she was 7 in the Pavlodar music school (teacher Nataliya Yerissova). In 2010 she won third prize in the 44th Republican Festival-Competition of Young Musicians and was invited to the Republican Kazakh specialized music school named after Akhmet Zhubanov in Almaty to continue her education (teacher Gulnara Zhakeyeva). At the age of 18 Kamilya made her debut with the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Republic of Kazakhstan playing Beethoven's Concerto No. 3 in C minor. She currently is a master's degree student at SMU in the studio of Stefan Engels.

Dana Sudborough is a vibraphonist, composer, photographer, union organizer, father, and nature lover.

Open Classical produces and promotes events that place classical music into the heart of everyday popular culture. **Mark Landson** is founder of Open Classical. With a lifetime commitment to classical music combined with an entrepreneurial drive, Mark has brought a dream to life with Open Classical. His vision is to provide an opportunity for musicians to hone their skills while simultaneously creating a new experience for fans and performers. The Open Classical musicians in this concert include: **Brent Buemi** (Clarinet), **Tracie Kaip** (Flute), **Mark Landson** (Violin), **Michelle Pokley** (Flute), **Johanna Rohler** (Flute), **Brice Smith** (Flute), **Patricio Andrés Gutiérrez Vielma** (Cello), and **Jennifer Wheeler** (Flute).

Anthony J. Elia is Director and J.S. Bridwell Foundation Endowed Librarian. He is the program organizer for *A Festival of Form*.

Bridwell Library

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We hope you enjoyed this event and look forward to
seeing you again soon.

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