

## ***Lampo Folio* Introduction**

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Since its founding in late 1997, Lampo has helped artists realize risk-taking performances and experimental works where, very often, the outcome is uncertain or unknown. While its programs regularly welcome large audiences, several years ago the organization introduced a new series of commissioned music, designed for the 10 x 20-foot dimensions of the Lampo office. In these short, person-to-person concerts, attendance was limited to two to four people for each 15-minute set, and the artist performed multiple times every hour over the course of an afternoon. The shows could be both awkward and revelatory, and they pushed Lampo to think more about developing alternate models for presenting and producing live performances. This publication arose out of those same concerns, during the pandemic, when gathering in person at any scale became impossible.

The *Lampo Folio* is a collection of text-based scores from ten interdisciplinary artists who are all engaged on some level with sound and language. Each commissioned work is published in the form of instructions that can be used to enact a personal, possibly intimate performance at home. Taken together, these scores also suggest the prospect of repeatable, even synchronous performances by others. The *Lampo Folio* creates new stages within domestic spaces, and is a means for thinking about the social conditions of performance, particularly at a time when home life and shared experiences have been upended.

The contributors represent a variety of creative practices, including music, sculpture, installation, film and video, dance, performance, and poetry. A number of them are musicians who move between improvisation and composition, and we were curious how they would approach verbal notation. And for those who come from outside sound or music, we wanted to see how they might reconsider text scores from the periphery.

Text scores or event scores emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a way to advance chance operations and interpretative autonomy by the performer. Traditional scores on staff paper either could no longer properly communicate the composer's intentions, or they privileged trained musicians. To evolve the form it was reduced to a series of sequential written instructions that, in their openness, are capable of yielding an unknowable variety of results. George Brecht, Alison Knowles, Yoko Ono, La Monte Young and other artists associated with the Fluxus group are cited as among the early practitioners. The impact these artists made was substantial, and their innovations were quickly adopted and expanded by others, which in essence established a new tradition within the field of experimental music.

The *Lampo Folio* is in conversation with this history, especially with the sentiment that music can be performed by non-musicians who, despite their lack of training, are fully capable of creating sound. Our interest in interpretation, non-musicality or whatever you'd call it, and the notion that the participant completes the event are all consistent with the strategies of the old avant-garde. But we also aspire to offer something different with this collection, and we encouraged contributors to move beyond the syntax, grammar, and devices of Fluxus and other familiar examples.

Our project to commission instructional scores began with a set of open-ended instructions. Rather than duplicate the short texts and simple gestures associated with the genre, we asked the *Lampo Folio* artists: What else can a text score be?

We requested that they write scores that could be interpreted by a reader without musical training or access to conventional instruments. We did not define any specific duration for works, but emphasized that we were neither looking for miniatures nor epics. Like any score, these new text scores would provide the parameters for a reproducible event. We raised the possibility that people in distant places could stage simultaneous performances, even though they would be invisible to each other. For everyone to be in sync, we asked the artists to indicate a time of day or night for their piece to be performed. They could assign an exact hour or align their work with parts of the day, like "during lunch" or "after a nap." We intended to evoke a sense of occasion and a sort of imagined collective.

In some respects, this project is a reaction to the advent of streaming venues and the ways that virtual performances have redefined what constitutes a performance, performer, and an audience. While the benefits of streaming are many, we sought to consider the moment from another perspective, with paper to hold, and an opportunity to participate actively rather than watch passively. With such role reversals at play, we are reevaluating how the different positions—audience and performer, venue and home—all fold into each other.

Each *Lampo Folio* score is printed on a tabloid-size sheet, folded to create four sides or pages. We asked the artists what the fold or act of folding might mean for their work. With a tip of the hat to Roc Jiménez de Cisneros, whose interest in metaphorical folds inspired us here, we prompted artists to think about the crease, where one thing is bent, or where two things converge. We suggested they explore symmetry, doubles, doppelgängers, folding as the combination of unequal mixtures, folding as failure, unfolding time, people in the fold bound together by a common aim, and so on. These thoughts might inform the way a score reads or what it looks like, or signal an action, a structure, or another form entirely.

Having no real sense of how all this would pan out, we found that the stylistically diverse contributions shared some underlying concerns and approaches. Nikita Gale and Jessie Marino both embraced the idea of working with folds, and their works require the physical manipulation of the score as an object. Sarah Hennies, Sergei Tcherepnin and Andrew Lampert all called upon compositional forms that address musical technique and sound construction. Each of their scores is essentially rational and marked by linear movement, as well as an interest in grappling with precision. In contrast, Bonnie Jones and Gala Porras-Kim both made scores that propose a kind of mental time travel.

Other contributors focused on the act of reading and actively tested the notion of performatability. Through a sequence of photos, Nour Mobarak's piece directs a full day of noise reduction. Jennifer Walshe created 24 texts using AI trained on record reviews. Her work is almost like a foley script for a radio play or film that could never be produced. In his score, Elliot Reed begins with someone else's signature sound, namely Whitney Houston, and while his composition includes numbered steps its realization stretches from the possible to the implausible. Although quite dissimilar, these three pieces are at once matter-of-fact and yet thoroughly absurd.

Attempting to play any of these ten scores raises a number of questions. How do you know you are doing it right or wrong? How closely must the directions be followed? Does being a fan of so-called "difficult music" serve as an alternate form of musical training when it comes to making decisions as a performer? If you are the performer, who is the audience? Does anyone clap at the end? Should the performance be documented, and if so what does one do with the recording? Should it be streamed, put on YouTube or Instagram, or otherwise sent out into the world? The ultimate question, perhaps, is can these scores simply exist as texts and do they even need to be performed? You are the only one who can answer these and many other questions for yourself.

We invite you to interpret and perform the scores in the *Lampo Folio*, in whole or in part, in any order and with whatever frequency you like. Let us know how it goes.