

2021 REPORT

APRIL 25-MAY 1, 2021

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

FESTIVAL

OF THE

CREATIVE ARTS™

Art finds a way



Brandeis

[BRANDEIS.EDU/ARTS/FESTIVAL](https://brandeis.edu/arts/festival)

 [@CREATEATBRANDEIS](https://www.instagram.com/createatbrandeis)

The Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts

celebrates the abundant creativity of Brandeis students, faculty and staff, joined by distinguished guest artists.

The inaugural festival, directed by Leonard Bernstein, marked Brandeis' first Commencement, in 1952. It was dedicated to Bernstein's belief that "the art of an era is a reflection of the society in which it is produced."

As Brandeis has grown, so has the Festival. We welcome and encourage the participation of people of all communities, generations and life experiences. The Festival is a forum for an exchange of learning among faculty, practitioners, students, staff and audience members through which we support continuous reflection and learning about the arts.

The 2021 Festival celebrates the determination of the Brandeis creative community to make art during a global pandemic. We will look back at this time and remember not just the strangeness of distant collaboration and the novel uses of technology, but also the persistent appreciation for community and the belief that art finds a way.



CREATING A FESTIVAL IN A PANDEMIC

While the 2020-21 academic year saw a return to campus for many students, staff and faculty, the arts community faced significant challenges.

Collaborative planning for the Festival began in fall of 2020 and resulted in several innovative programs.

CHALLENGES

- Gatherings limited to 25 (outdoors)
- No singing or playing of wind instruments or brass instruments allowed in public, indoors or outdoors
- Two-thirds of the student body living off campus
- Most staff and faculty working off campus
- No guests allowed on campus
- Limited exhibition, performance, studio and rehearsal space

NEW PROGRAMS TO MEET CHALLENGES

- Super Sunday video
- Gifted Givers
- Popup student art exhibition
- Create@Brandeis Craft Market

NEW PROGRAM

SUPER SUNDAY VIDEO

Health and safety protocols made it impossible to produce the traditional Super Sunday afternoon of short performances and art workshops, held in multiple venues and open to the public. Instead, we invited the Brandeis community to submit recorded performances to be combined into one spectacular program.

In collaboration with Brandeis SIMS (Sound and Image Media Studios), we produced a 45-second preview of the video that was shared widely across social media channels.

The 2.5-hour Super Sunday video premiered at a live watch party on the Arts Brandeis channel on YouTube, [where it may now be viewed anytime.](#)

The widely disseminated invitation to submit recordings resulted in 39 solo and ensemble performances and art demonstrations. The number of participating student clubs tripled over previous years. Singer-songwriters and other individuals had their own share of the spotlight.

A segment produced by WBRS 100.1 FM included alumni musicians and composers from the classes of 1970, 1980, 2018 and 2019.

The Super Sunday video was produced in collaboration with Spinach Pie Productions, founded by Joshua Louis Simon '07, and edited by Jordan Mudd '20.

NEW PROGRAM

GIFTED GIVERS

Gifted Givers provided community members with the opportunity to express their creativity and generosity through connection and exchange.

The idea for Gifted Givers originated in an advisory committee discussion of how to support the creation of public art and performance this year. Because of the challenges posed by Covid protocols, we decided to use the budget for Festival grants to create and deliver gifts of art.

Through an outreach campaign that included social media, targeted email and class visits, we invited Brandeis students, faculty, staff and alumni to create works of art to give away to their fellow Brandeisians during the Festival of the Arts.

The result: 58 Brandesians created 463 gifts in all media, including pottery, paintings, jewelry, fiber art, music and poetry. Non-tangible gifts included a music lesson, a studio critique and a virtual concert.

Students, faculty, staff and alumni were invited to choose their gifts from an online catalog, or in person at the Brandeis booths. (All 463 gifts were given away, except for a handful of stickers and buttons that will be given away during fall 2021 Arts Engagement programs.)

IMPACT

Givers enjoyed the invitation to experiment as well as putting their work into the hands and homes of grateful recipients. Many of the Givers were studio art majors who applied their studies to the creation of their gifts. Others incorporated their disciplines into their works, such as neuroscience postdoc Ekaterina Morozova, who made stickers with hand-drawn designs of waveforms and vectors.

Students and colleagues encouraged each other to participate, bringing new faces into the Arts at Brandeis network.

Recipients appreciated tangible gifts, whether they were studio art or craft. The most popular were pottery, jewelry and personalized gifts, while downloads were less popular.

ROOM TO GROW

This pilot program successfully engaged a wide audience and we look forward to expanding, focusing and curating it. Next year we would like to explore ways to facilitate direct connections between the givers and the recipients whether in person or online. Based on feedback from participants, we will explore celebrating Gifted Givers on campus with art-making demonstrations, custom gift-making, music and conversation between the makers and recipients. The online platform might include correspondence between Givers and recipients. On a practical level, a better online store platform is needed (the one we used fell short in several ways).

GIFTED GIVERS BY THE NUMBERS

58 GIFTED GIVERS

34 GIVERS RECEIVED FUNDING
TO CREATE THEIR GIFTS



55% STUDENTS

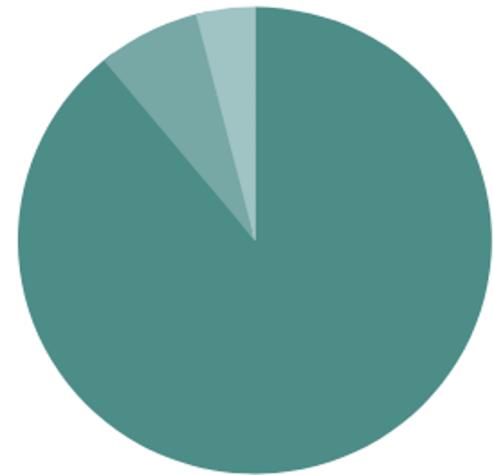
19% ALUMNI

19% STAFF

9% FACULTY /
POST-DOC

5% FAMILIES

463 GIFTS CREATED



89% FINE ARTS & CRAFTS

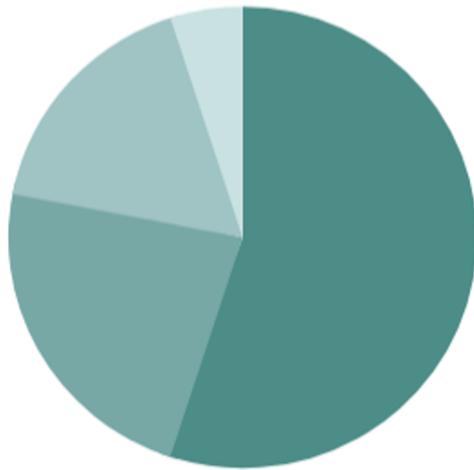
7% PERFORMANCE ARTS

4% DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

GIFTED GIVERS BY THE NUMBERS

185 ONLINE RECIPIENTS

2,362 WEBSITE VIEWS



55% STUDENTS

5% FACULTY /
POST-DOC

23% ALUMNI

17% STAFF

435 GIFTS DISTRIBUTED



54% ON CAMPUS GIVEAWAYS

40% ONLINE CATALOG

6% SAVED FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Just under half of the recipients chose their gift from an online catalog, for mailing or pickup on campus. The rest browsed gifts in person at the Gifted Givers booths.

FEEDBACK FROM GIFTED GIVERS

“[Gifted Givers] felt like a very wholesome exchange in a time when we've all been disconnected and isolated. The woman who selected my gift emailed me to thank me, which was super sweet and made me feel part of the community.”

Gifted Giver Holly Newman '22

“It felt great having a connection to Brandeis, where I really ‘found’ myself. I loved making a connection with someone who I didn't know, but who likely knew what it meant to be in the same place.”

Gifted Giver Sara Kenney '18

“This was such a wonderful idea. I received some beautiful postcards to mail out to my friends and family. What a nice uplift after this year!”

Recipient Jill Maley (Heller School staff)



“Thank you for all the love and care that went into making these gifts.”

“Thank you for making these days more pleasant!”

“Thank you for bringing more beauty into our world.”

“You make Brandeis smile.”

Anonymous notes from recipients

NEW PROGRAM

CREATE@BRANDEIS CRAFT MARKET

Brandeis crafters were invited to sell their goods at the first-ever Create@Brandeis Craft Market. Eleven students and two staff members (many of whom were also Gifted Givers) participated in markets on April 27 (in Fellows Garden) and April 29 (moved to a Great Lawn tent because of rain). Upward of 100 campus community members browsed and purchased paintings and drawings, jewelry, body products, stationery and more.

ROOM TO GROW

In a post-event survey, crafters said they would like to hold the market at least once a semester in the future. They suggested that Arts Engagement provide more support around setting up and displaying goods, as well as signage. Out of eight responses, five said that selling their creations was a source of income for them and three called it a hobby; three said it was both.

Pictured: Sarah Lavin '21, left, with a customer; Aaron Needle, Rose Art Museum gallery attendant; Dennis Hicks, director of Student Activities.

NEW PROGRAM

POPOP STUDENT ART EXHIBITION



“Facade,” by Cyril Ojilere ’21 (postponed from the 2020 Festival of the Arts).

With the Dreitzer Gallery being used as a classroom for Intermediate Painting, exhibition space was at a premium. Studio art major Anna Ginsburg ’21 worked with Arts Engagement to curate an informal exhibition, “Happenings,” consisting of works by five undergraduates displayed in the Shapiro Campus Center and Usdan Student Center. Four of the students were Fine Arts majors, and two were supported by BIPOC Creator grants from Arts Engagement.

CAMPUS PARTNERS

Departments, programs and student organizations from across the university collaborated with Arts Engagement on production of the Festival and/or produced their own Festival events.

DEPARTMENTS & PROGRAMS

- Archives and Special Collections
- Brandeis University Press *
- CAST (Creative Arts and Social Transformation)
- Center for German and European Studies *
- Department of Fine Arts
- Department of Music
- Department of Theater Arts
- Office of Communications
- Schusterman Center for Israel Studies *
- SIMS (Sound and Image Media Studio) *
- Student Activities
- Women's Studies Research Center

* *New partnership*

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- African Dance and Drumming Club
- Ballet Club
- Hooked on Tap
- Pottery Club
- Too Cheap for Instruments
- SCRAM (Student Committee for the Rose Art Museum)
- WBRS 100.1 FM *

* *New partnership*

FEEDBACK FROM CAMPUS PARTNERS

“The **Zionist Phantom virtual exhibition** offered a unique insight into a groundbreaking project by renowned Israeli artist Dana Arieli, in her first US exhibition. The Festival of the Arts connected us to new audiences, widened our impact, and helped us to think creatively about what a digital exhibit could look like: a framework we plan to replicate for the future.”

*Shayna Weiss '07, PhD
Associate Director, Schusterman Center for Israel Studies*



“Collaboration with the Festival of the Arts made it possible for WBRS to book a live **virtual concert and Q&A with singer-songwriter Phoebe Bridgers**, who was nominated this year for five Grammy Awards. The Festival team came up with great ideas to maximize audience, including giveaways of a skeleton onesie (Phoebe’s trademark stage costume), and free theater snacks to enjoy during the virtual the event. The concert had the highest attendance of any WBRS event this year and the highest in the Festival. We would love to collaborate with the festival again.”

*April Ginns '21
Music Director, WBRS 100.1 FM*



CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

The Festival of the Arts serves as a platform for works created by the Division of Creative Arts under faculty guidance. This year, the Festival program included:

- Presentation of capstone projects by students in Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation
- Productions of *The Lathe of Heaven* and senior thesis works (Theater Arts)
- Outdoor performance by *Fafali: Music and Dance from Ghana* (MUS 87b)
- Performance of new works by graduate student composers, performed by the Lydian String Quartet
- Presentations in the Undergraduate Research Symposium
- Outdoor performance by Neeti Kulkarni, viola, of a selection from her senior recital

AUDIENCE BY THE NUMBERS



31 ONLINE PROGRAMS

700+ ATTENDEES

9 IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

325+ ATTENDEES



HIGHEST ATTENDED PROGRAMS

ONLINE

PHOEBE BRIDGERS CONCERT

ARTIST TALK: BARRY MOSER,
MASTER WOOD ENGRAVER

SUPER SUNDAY WATCH
PARTY

EXHIBITION LAUNCH &
ARTIST TALK: THE ZIONIST
PHANTOM

CAST CAPSTONE
PRESENTATIONS

IN PERSON

CREATE@BRANDEIS CRAFT
MARKET

GIFTED GIVERS GIVEAWAYS

PERFORMANCE BY FAFALI: MUSIC
AND DANCE FROM GHANA

Notes on attendance: These numbers are rough estimates. Not all event producers reported attendance figures, and in some cases, multiple people attended an online event under a single registration or login. While numbers are low compared to previous festivals, there were also fewer events. Neither the Rose Art Museum nor the Department of Music, for example, were able to present events. It is also reasonable to assume lower participation due to Zoom “burnout” and a compressed academic year with no spring break.

MARKETING AND MEDIA

EXTERNAL MARKETING

- Direct email to 7,000 Arts at Brandeis subscribers and targeted student lists
- Postcard mailed to 8,000 alumni from select class years
- Listings in ArtsBoston and Boston.com

CAMPUS MEDIA

- Coverage on BrandeisNOW, in the Brandeis *Justice* and the Brandeis *Hoot*.

FESTIVAL WEBSITE

- The number of page views continues to grow. During the period April 1 - May 1, 2021, the index page had 8,606 views.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Instagram continues to be the primary driver of social media traffic, with Facebook mostly used by alumni.
- An Instagram Story hosted by a student on the main Brandeis account resulted in more than 2,200 views. The highest-performing Instagram post on the CreateAtBrandeis account was the announcement of the Phoebe Bridgers concert.
- The highest-performing Tweet was the Super Sunday video preview.

COMMITTEES

ADVISORY

- Sonia Almeida, Associate Professor of Fine Arts
- Nancy Armstrong, Adjunct Professor of the Practice of Theater Arts
- Caitlin Julia Rubin, Associate Curator and Director of Programs, Rose Art Museum
- Ingrid Schorr, Director of Arts Engagement (chair)
- Andrea Segar, Associate Professor of the Practice of Music
- Toni Shapiro-Phim, Associate Professor of Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST)

OPERATIONS TEAM

- J.B. Barricklo, Department of Theater Arts
- Quinn Corte, Arts Engagement
- Eli Jacobson, Media Technology Services
- Christine Kahn, Department of Fine Arts
- Susan Metrican, Women's Studies Research Center
- Deborah Rosenstein, Department of Music
- Ingrid Schorr, Arts Engagement (chair)
- Teri Tozzi, Student Activities

CAMPUS STREET TEAM

- Joshua Aldwinckle-Povey '23
- Anna Ginsburg '21
- Rebecca Goldfarb '21
- Anna Kehoe '24
- Anya Lance-Chacko '24
- Emma Matthews '24
- Mello Wilsted '22

THANK YOU!

FESTIVAL PATRONS AND SPONSORS

Elaine Reuben '63
Aaron Foundation Visiting Artist Fund
for Theater, Music, and Fine Arts

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!
April 2022

DIVISION OF CREATIVE ARTS | BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Ingrid Schorr, Director of Arts Engagement
Quinn Corte, Project Coordinator
Sam Forman '21, Programs Assistant

Photography: Quinn Corte, Sam Forman, Mike Lovett, Ingrid Schorr