

Obituary – Hans Reichel

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In the spring of 1949, a UFO deposited an infant in Hagen, Germany. As with all claims of extraterrestrial intervention, the details are vague and impossible to verify sixty-two years later. Like everyone else, the child's development and proclivities were programmed in the pattern of his DNA. However, whereas most of us leave to chance the blending of the genetic material of our mother and father, this child was intentionally designed by alien intellects with scientific



Daxophone sticks. (from www.daxo.de)

and philosophical knowledge beyond humanity's current comprehension to perform specific tasks during the course of its life. The aliens programmed this child with certain traits deemed important to them and omitted other traits common to the rest of us. For example, the child possessed a love for shapes of all kinds—the shapes of sounds, the shapes of wood and the shapes of letters. The child however lacked the genetic programming responsible for the presence of a biochemical pathway in the brain that triggers responses to the reaction of others. So, for example, when told that his love for finding new shapes of sounds was leading him into realms far from the norm, deviant, disturbed and undeniably anharmonic realms, the child did not abandon his pursuits, but continued forward with little recognition of the people left behind, tutting to themselves, as he disappeared down a foggy, isolated path.

This path led the child to places other humans did not venture for many reasons. Those with artistic sensibilities judged there to be no artistic merit along that path. Those with a knack for making money were quite certain the path would lead to poverty. Those with social inclinations found the path far too lonely for their liking. None of these admonitions had any effect on the child. He laughed them off, for among his other attributes, he had a light spirit and a buoyant sense of humor. Thus the child proceeded alone into the forest where he set to work. Periodically he returned to the rest of the world with the fruits of his labor and put them on display.

All of the warnings were born out. The art was at best of marginal culture. Money did not rain down from the sky. Throngs of fanatics did not gather to celebrate the work. This too had no impact on the child, owing as has been made clear above to the absence of a critical sequence of brain chemistry

required to translate the responses of others into changes in oneself or one's behavior. Thus the child returned to the forest and continued his work.

What sort of gifts emerged from the forest? Shapes never seen before in the world of man. These shapes took the form of musical instruments, formerly unknown. The few scholars who took passing notice of these instruments labeled them idiophones, because their music was unique to their form. Indeed, the shapes of the music coaxed from these instruments had not been heard on the Earth before and nor will it be heard again. Did that instrument sound like a tuba played by a badger riding inside a sputtering Model-T? Perhaps it did. You object? You argue, "These sounds have all been heard before—the tuba, the badger, the sputtering engine of a Model-T." But you have missed the critical point that when the child rendered these sounds from his instruments there was a music to them that did not exist in the individual sounds. The shape of this music was different and a synergistic sum of more than its parts.

To be sure, in this world of seven billion, there were a few who appreciated these shapes. There were crazy, unbelievable co-operatives guided by people of questionable business acumen, giving themselves confounding names like "Free Music Production" that to whatever extent possible promoted and made available these shapes. The shapes traveled the world in small bits, like butterflies and hummingbirds that migrate thousands of miles. The shapes found homes in odd niches. They lodged in people's ears and were usually swatted away like gnats or any other buzzing nuisance.

There were even those who invited the child out of the woods. "Come and play with us," they said. The child acquiesced for his solitary work was not driven by an antisocial disposition but rather by an unveering predilection to follow his own path. You can find these combined shapes if you look hard enough, but the most brilliant of the child's works were solitary. They emerged from guitars constructed with bridge displaced or the "daxophone", wooden shapes perturbed by a bow and set to vibrating over a sound box. These songs were utterly alien on Earth, but unbeknownst to us, hearkened back to the grand, classical orchestras of the sough of wind among the call of the creatures residing in the jungles of his distant homeworld.

What is the message of these shapes? It is difficult to decipher. Some were reverent, lovely objects of wonder. Many were irreverent, the badger frequently among them. To our ears we hear in these shapes an uncompromising burst of creation, a vision of life outside this world, a life in which a kind of beauty that did not exist before can be created from the nothing and everything that surrounds us.

In late November, 2011 a passing spaceship reclaimed this child. It was in the area of Wuppertal on other business but detected such lovely, familiar shapes on its radar that it descended through the clouds and settled to the ground, gathered him up, and vanished into the void without explanation or words of parting. The world will never know another Hans Reichel.

This obituary is set in the "Dax Compact Bold" font, a shape designed by Hans Reichel.