

## Automatic Reproduction of Constantine Delilabros' Music Scores

### Edwin Janzen

Once upon a time, when Panayiotis Delilabros was but a boy, his father would invite him into the smoke-filled kitchen of their simple house, which doubled as Constantine Delilabros' office. The chain-smoking father would invite the son to "listen to the sound of my calculator" — a humble Casio — that played musical notes when you depressed the numbers.

Constantine Delilabros' musical compositions consisted of sequences of numbers drawn by his secret methods from an old, well-worn Bible, which he believed contained hidden codes predicated upon complex mathematical formulae and symbols. The young Panos was not permitted to discuss his father's esoteric studies with anyone else.

Constantine destroyed all his notes prior to his passing in November, 2000. Returning home, Panayiotis Delilabros found his father's old Bible, and was able ultimately to unravel his father's arcane methods.

Once, this antique Bible gave up Constantine Delilabros' secret, but today it rests beneath a glass case, and his secret is secret again. Visitors may contemplate the Bible's worn exterior and wonder. They receive but two clues to its mysteries: the electronic notes being played automatically by the old Casio calculator resting next to it, its sound amplified by a speaker elsewhere in the space; and Constantine Delilabros' musical scores of long sequences of numbers punctuated by commas, which hang in frames on the gallery walls.

The artistic gesture that underpins *Automatic Reproduction of Constantine Delilabros' Music Scores* comprises a sort of post-modern pre-humanism, which transports us to something resembling a theistically mediated, neo-medieval space. Notwithstanding its circuitry and plastic housing, the calculator's primitive facility evokes medieval musicians' simple zithers and hurdy-gurdys, while the cryptic scores on the gallery walls suggest the heterogeneous, sometimes improvised notational schemae that abounded prior to the five-line staff of classical music notation. Reason and science have not yet been invented, and Bach has not yet been born.

At some point in the past between modernity and the Middle Ages, the pre-modern translation of knowledge from father to son became sundered. Today this translation often happens not at all, as the traditional methods and rituals by which boys once became men have been left behind. Today, boys becoming men do it flying solo, sequestered from their fathers by multiple socially mediated layers or screens. Approaching the father and attempting to remove these screens, the son traverses a labyrinth, a journey that begins at the traditional homestead and winds everywhere about, as necessary, for the boy to discover, piece together and master the father's secret knowledge.

My father, the Gnostic ... the Kabbalist ... the Freemason. The numbers, always the numbers. "In the beginning was the Word," the Book of John instructs us. Yet, there has always existed a minority dedicated to the primacy of the numbers. Where father once went, there I must go, too.

Among other things, the labyrinthine passage to adulthood requires of the son the successful shift from emulation to a kind of empathic potentiality. The boy seeking his father's praise becomes the young man who comprehends unjudgingly the father's weaknesses, takes into his own heart his strengths, masters his tools and techniques, unravels his secrets — and then keeps them.

There is an uplink to divinity, here — some kind of numerological battery charger. Its meaning hasn't been given to us to understand — but, inspired by these media here assembled in this strange collaboration of mystic father and son, the awareness of it is inescapable.

This text is part of a writing series by members of articule, reflecting on the works presented during the gallery's 2009-2010 programming season. Edwin Janzen's text has been produced for Panayiotis Delilabros' exhibition *When you go back, Nothing is Real*, presented from November 6 to December 13, 2009, and is also available as a pdf on the gallery's website.

**articule 30** 262 Fairmount W. Montreal (QC) H2V 2G3 T 514 842 9686 info@articule.org www.articule.org  
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