

# BRO NEVEZ

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE  
NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S. BRANCH



Breton in the schools of Brittany  
An on-going effort

**KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG**

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The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, May, August and November. Contributions, letters to the Editor, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor.

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to do this. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above.

*Ideas expressed within this newsletter are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent ICDBL philosophy or policy.*

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## New Website for the U.S. ICDBL

Check out the new look for the U.S. ICDBL website – and coming soon, new content and some updates too: [www.icdbl.org](http://www.icdbl.org)

## On the Cover

You will read a number of articles in this issue of Bro Nevez about the continuing work for the future of the Breton language (and other languages found within the borders of France).

The option to learn Breton in school as a child is obviously an important element for the future of this language. During the month of April Ofis ar Brezhoneg posted large signs throughout Brittany with a "thumbs-up" for Breton in the schools. And on these signs was a telephone number for parents to call for information about the Diwan schools and the bilingual programs in the public and Catholic schools (Div Yezh and Dihun). As reported by Ofis ar Brezhoneg, right now 14,709 children are enrolled in some 430 establishments in these programs. Check out their website for more information and resources: [www.ofis-bzh.org](http://www.ofis-bzh.org).



## Regional Language Speakers of France Demand Asylum from UNESCO

On March 15, 2013, some one hundred representatives for the different languages of France (Breton, Basque, Corsican, Flemish, Occitan, Catalan, Creole, Alsatian, and others) went to the UNESCO headquarters to request cultural asylum and protection for their cultural patrimony. A delegation of 13 was given an hour meeting during which they formally presented their request.

*The following is the English language translation of information from the Réseau Européen pour l'Égalité des Langues - Association des Rencontres inter-régionales des langues et cultures régionales ([www.languesregionales.org/](http://www.languesregionales.org/))*

## FORMAL REQUEST FOR PROTECTION BY THE UNESCO - 15 May 2013

We, speakers of regional languages of the French State, facing the linguistic discrimination we are the object of, we demand cultural asylum in UNESCO. The President of the Republic, Francois Hollande, has pledged to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe.

This commitment No. 56 of his program, repeatedly reiterated to the voters as to the European Parliament and repeatedly reminded by the Government had to go through a revision of the Constitution which has been removed from the draft Constitutional Amendment Bill.

At the same time, the bill on the rebuilding of the schools of the Republic still under debate and the draft law on decentralization, further reduces the status of our languages when they do not ignore them.

It is the hope of recognition, finally, for millions of users and citizens attached to their languages, which departs on a simple view of the Council of State which does not oblige to anything.

It is a chilly decline on an archaic vision of a monolingual society, be it French; pluralism and diversity are being undermined; democracy is being reached; social dynamic and creativity of our territories we so need in this difficult period may be broken.

Therefore, given its role internationally in defense of the diversity of languages and cultures, for human rights and sustainable development today, we speakers of languages of France, we demand cultural asylum to UNESCO.

We also ask our elected parliamentarians to amend the constitution to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe in accordance with the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law which underlies it and the President of the Republic's commitments.

*In Annex is the following document which provides more perspective on why language speakers have approached UNESCO for assistance.*

### France in contradiction with UNESCO and its international commitments

UNESCO promotes linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

UNESCO recognizes that, because of their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development languages have a strategic importance for people and for the planet. It is increasingly recognized that languages play

a vital role in development: guarantees of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, they are also a mean to achieve quality education for all and strengthen cooperation, to build inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and to mobilize political will for applying the benefits of science and technology for sustainable development.

UNESCO estimates that if nothing is done, half of the approximately 6,000 languages spoken today will disappear by the end of the century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge contained especially in indigenous languages

In France, the safeguarding of languages does not seem to have progressed. The Atlas of UNESCO still lists 26 endangered languages in France, to varying degrees: 13 seriously endangered, 8 endangered and 5 in vulnerable situations. For example, the Basque language is considered as a vulnerable language, while Occitan and Breton languages are considered as "seriously endangered."

While in Europe and in the world, France is often said to be at the forefront of the principles of protection of linguistic and cultural diversity, considered as essential values for the future of humanity, the French Republic, paradoxically, remains deeply marked by an old imperial and centralized model unsuited to today's world and to the will of its own citizens to be recognized in their own identities in the territories where they live.

France has played a key role in the development of several international conventions now in force, which promote the safeguarding of cultural and linguistic diversity:

France signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ONU – 10th December 1948:

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

France signed the 2001 Universal Declaration of UNESCO on Cultural Diversity:

Its Action Plan calls for Member States to take the appropriate measures towards:

- safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages;
- encouraging linguistic diversity – while respecting the mother tongue – at all levels of education, wherever

possible, and fostering the learning of several languages from the earliest age; and  
- promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace and encouraging universal access through the global network to all information in the public domain.

France has ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

This Convention recognizes the vital role of language in the expression and transmission of living heritage. All intangible cultural heritage domains – from knowledge about the universe to rituals, performing arts to handicrafts – depend on language for their day-to-day practice and inter-generational transmission. In the domain of oral traditions and expressions, language is not only a vehicle of intangible heritage, it constitutes their very essence.

France has ratified the 2005 Convention 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

This Convention asserts in its preamble that linguistic diversity as a fundamental element of cultural diversity.

In its objectives (article 1) it recommends: “to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels”;

In its principles (article 2), it proclaims:

- Human rights: “Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions are guaranteed.”

- Equal dignity of all cultures: “The protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions presuppose the recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples.”

- Sustainable development: “Cultural diversity is a rich asset for individuals and societies. The protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity are an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Despite these ratifications, in its response dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008 to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations, France claims (§ 331): “France does not recognize in it the existence of minorities as such having opposable collective rights in its legal order. It considers that the application of human rights to all citizens of a state, in equality and non-discrimination, normally brings to them, whatever their

status, full protection, to which they are entitled. This is a particularly demanding conception of human rights.”

However, we note that this statement of principle, far from being demanding, does not really commit to anything and certainly not to fight against inequality. In fact, the French conception which is the laughing stock of other nations is fully and fundamentally discriminatory. It creates two classes of citizens: those whose dominant “particularism” is defended and promoted, and those belonging to other cultural traditions of a so diverse Republic, are subject to a total assimilation policy, contrary to “the recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures” affirmed by the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity.

Does not true equality allow everyone to choose their own identity and not be subject to a particular identity, be it that of the central government which was formed from the French monarchy?



## Regional Languages and Schooling in France - Good News and Bad News

This June the National Assembly of France adopted what some view as a ground-breaking recognition of the legality of incorporating regional languages into public education in France. As part of a law to reorganize schooling the Senate adopted Article 27 bis which states that “the regional languages and cultures belong to the patrimony of France, their teaching is favored in those regions where they are in use.” A nice part of the Article is its authorization for any teacher to incorporate elements of language and culture when deemed relevant. Although this legislation does not mean that resources needed to expand the place of regional languages will necessarily be forthcoming, it is the first time that legislation concerning French education has given the use of regional languages a green light. Some might view it as only a yellow light since only two means of implementing the study of regional languages and culture are offered: teaching about languages and cultures, or a bilingual program where teaching is done half in the regional language and half in French. There is no green light given to immersion teaching such as that used by the Breton Diwan schools or the Basque Seaska schools – these are still considered by the government to be contrary to the French Constitution.

While limited, one has to congratulate senators who worked to insure that the laws to reorganize schooling did not exclude teaching of and in the regional languages. It’s a small step but an important one.





## Breton – A Plus for Finding a Job

ONISEP (Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions) is linked with the Ministry of National Education of France and has a website loaded with information for students about career choices and advanced education. For the first time, it has developed a section that specifically addresses careers where the Breton language is important and/or desirable.

The site starts with the following positive statement: "Why speak Breton today? Far from being a language of the past, Breton offers openings for a number of careers, notably working with children."

Those wanting more information are linked to "Le Bon Plan: Du breton dans les métiers / Brezhoneg er micherioù." Here you are assured that Breton can be a plus in a profession, and the ability to speak it may make you more attractive to a potential employer. Practical advice is given on training but the web site also includes stories from people in different trades who speak Breton on the job.

Some of the areas highlighted are teaching (nursery, pre and primary school, middle and high school), recreation center work, audiovisual, translation, publishing, journalism, book layout, translation, website design and maintenance, business, marketing, sales, and work with the elderly.

While being able to speak Breton will not guarantee you find a job in a very challenging economy, it is clear that it can give a graduate a bit of an edge all other things being equal, and there are jobs where being able to speak (read and write) Breton are required!



## Brittany to have its own internet identity with .bzh

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers gave authorization on May 10, 2013 for Brittany to develop its own internet abbreviation .bzh.

This follows nearly ten years of work by many people including the organization [www.bzh](http://www.bzh) with the support of the Regional Council of Brittany. This is just the beginning and work will be done to ease the entry of this new identifier for Breton websites.

## I Must Be Dreaming

When this image was sent out with the tag line that these signs were to be found on roads entering Brittany on its eastern border in Nantes, Fougères, Clisson, Vitré, Châteaubriant, etc., my reaction was first happiness, then shock, and then a sense of delusion for actually believing for a moment that such signs could exist. Such designations for roads to let you know you are entering Brittany and leaving France are never likely to be seen in my lifetime – especially in the Loire-Atlantique which still fights to be reunified with "official" Brittany.



## Wales and Brittany

<http://www.culture-bretagne.org/>

Throughout the month of May the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) has organized a number of events to celebrate Brittany and Wales. These have included films and discussion, photography exhibits, talks on all topics, and music. Some events included:

Walks in the Welsh countryside to gather together citizens of twin cities of Brittany/Wales.

Fest noz featuring both Breton and Welsh dances and musicians.

Book signings and talks by authors Jakez Gaucher, Yvan Guyénennec and Jean Cevaer on Welsh and Celtic history and inter Celtic relations, the Welsh bards, contemporary history of Wales, the maritime link between Saint-Nazaire and Wales

Gathering at Tavarn Ty Elise in Plouyé for a reading of poems by Dylan Thomas set to music on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

An evening for storytelling of Welsh tales.

Exhibits on the theme of navigation between Wales and Brittany and coal mining in Wales.

The annual Day for Europe in Brest with stands for many countries including Wales – the honoree for this year’s celebration.

An exhibit on European citizenship with panels in Breton, Welsh, English and French. And a talk by the President of the Maison d’Europe in Brest on European citizenship.

A concert in Lannion with songs in Breton, Welsh, Spanish and English (gospel) with choirs from cities twinned with Lannion - the German city of Günzburg, Caerphilly, and Viveiro in Galicia.



### The Celtic League [www.celticleague.net](http://www.celticleague.net)

As described on the website home page: The Celtic League is an inter Celtic organisation that campaigns for the political, language, cultural and social rights of the Celtic nations. It does this across a broad range of issues. It highlights human rights abuse, monitors military activity and focuses

on political, socio-economic, environmental, language and cultural issues, which generally or specifically affect one or more of the Celtic countries in some way. The organisation also aims to further each of the Celtic nations right to independence and to promote the benefits of inter Celtic cooperation. Additionally, the League draws attention to matters that we believe bear a wider concern for the peoples of the Celtic countries.

Our work is achieved through the activities of our organisation at branch and central level, the publication of a high quality quarterly magazine, CARN and a regular Celtic League news service.

Supporters of the League’s aims and objectives can get involved with the work of the organisation by becoming full members of the Celtic League, which is open to all and entitles you to a free subscription to CARN. Alternatively supporters can keep in touch with developments within the organisation by subscribing to CARN and/or subscribing to our free internet news

service and/or by becoming part of our online community (via Facebook, Flickr, etc.)

Editor’s Note: Carn is an excellent publication where you can keep up with a more political side to events in the Celtic countries and where you will find a lot of text in the Celtic languages – a true act of support in itself. To join or subscribe to Carn, log onto the website above.



### Hip Hop in Breton

The organization called “Face cachée,” based in Vannes, promotes hip hop music through classes, training and opportunities to perform. It has recently signed a

“Ya d’ar brezhoneg” agreement with the Ofis ar Brezhong. This means they have committed to the creation of a dozen areas where the Breton language will be promoted. Bravo! Yet more music of all styles where the Breton language is welcome.

### Festival des Vieilles Charrues

The old plows festival of Brittany is always a huge event. For the 21<sup>st</sup> year, this festival featuring rock and pop music will be held in the town of Carhaix in central western Brittany. It features a line-up of some big and lesser know stars. This year’s program includes Neil Young and Crazy Horse, Ramstein, Traoré, Avidan, The Hives, Vitalic, The Roots, Arkana, Lou doillon, Marc Lavoine, Mesparrow, BRNS, Elton John, and Carlos Santana to name just a few.



To show off Breton musical roots and the innovative ways Breton musicians interpret their heritage, you will find the Jacky Molard Acoustic Quartet, Startijenn, and the group Barzaz which has gotten back together for a 25 year anniversary.

There are dozens of festivals in Brittany not only during the summer months but throughout the year. These often feature the unique traditions of Breton music and dance, but can be quite international in flavor or feature jazz, rock or classical styles. See the “Links” list below to find some great websites where you can find festivals.



## Bretons in New York Ever Active

*The following is an e-mail letter I thought worth sharing with readers of Bro Nevez - Lois*

For the 7th year in a row BZH New York organized events to celebrate la Fete de la Bretagne from May 15th - 26th. This year's edition was a bit special as we took the show on the road organizing events in NY but also in New Mexico in a project we called "Phare Ouest meets the Far West", a musical collaboration between Breton and Native American musicians.

Our week of festivities in NY started on May 15th with a dinner to celebrate the 55th anniversary of jumelage [twinning] of Rennes and Rochester dinner at Bistro Vendome with the Consul General of France and the attaché économique et commercial au consulat des États-Unis pour le Grand Ouest.

The events continued with the annual St Yves Fest Noz with performances by Samuel Le Henanff Quartet, duo Helias/Gerard, and Sylvain Payot.

Following the fest noz we organized a musical collaboration and concert between Samuel Le Henanff quartet and John Sarantos (Native American flutist).

The events continued with a concert in the Lower East Side at the LivingRoom, and a special event at the Irish Arts Center featuring a Breton whisky tasting from Distillerie Warengheim and cheese tasting offered by Astoria Bier and Cheese.

The Fete de la Bretagne was a busy one in NYC in 2013 but it was only half of our events this year as we were in Albuquerque, New Mexico for 5 days following our NY events.

Kenavo!

BZH New York



For pictures of these events go to: <https://picasaweb.google.com/bzh..new.york/>

And for news of BZH-New York, check out their website [www.bzh-ny.org](http://www.bzh-ny.org)

## LINKS ... from the U.S. ICDBL website

[www.icdlb.org](http://www.icdlb.org)

Now that we have a new website, the challenge is to update information on it so that it is truly new and as useful as possible to those seeking information. For me, the links section of the website is a key feature since this helps people get to information from Bretons themselves. Who best to speak up for their language and culture and present it!

Below is just part of the revised links I have been working on. I would welcome suggestions from U.S. ICDBL members who have found particularly good links. Ideally down the road for the next revision I will try to note in some way those sites that have particularly strong Breton language presence, and sites that offer English material for those whose French language skills are minimal. Please enjoy using the links below and check out others on our website. - Lois

### Music, Dance & Festivals

[www.dastum.net](http://www.dastum.net)

Dastum was founded in 1972 for the collection, preservation, and promotion of Brittany's rich and still very lively oral traditions. Great site for information on traditional styles of music and song.

[www.gouelioubreizh.com](http://www.gouelioubreizh.com)

Gouelioù Breizh is a federation of Traditional Festival Committees of Brittany, and their site is a great source of information on festivals of Brittany.

[www.festival-interceltique.com](http://www.festival-interceltique.com)

Website for the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient, started in 1969 to promote the cultures of all the Celtic counties – including those of Spain. Now a 10-day festival, this includes a huge line up of great musicians and one of the annual competitions for the top bagads of Brittany.

[www.festival-cornouaille.com](http://www.festival-cornouaille.com)

This is the official site of the festival de Cornouaille that was created in 1923 by Louis Le Bourhis, and that takes place every year in Quimper.

[www.vieillescharrues.assoc.fr](http://www.vieillescharrues.assoc.fr)

A huge rock/pop festival held in Carhaix which attracts the biggest names in music, but also features Breton traditional music and innovative arrangements of it.

[www.tamm-kreiz.com](http://www.tamm-kreiz.com)

Site with listing of over 1,000 musical groups, 6,000 dates, 800 song/tune titles, and over 2,000 musicians and members. Excellent site to find web sites for you favorite performers and upcoming concerts, festoù noz and festivals. Check out the TKPédia, a growing resource base of information, currently including

descriptions of over 100 Breton dances and a “how to” for organizing a fest noz.

[www.fest-noz.net](http://www.fest-noz.net)

Site to locate fest-noz (night) and fest-deiz (day) by geographic location using a map, by date, or by performer. This seems to have stopped posting in 2012 but still includes an introduction to hundreds of singers, pipers, and groups so you can get a little mini-intro to a group by browsing.

[www.resonances-bretagne.org](http://www.resonances-bretagne.org)

Another site to find lots of diverse information on Breton music – all styles of music in Brittany – and a guide to concerts, festivals, etc.

[www.trombiniawer.net](http://www.trombiniawer.net)

A listing of hundreds of musicians you can locate through an index of instruments, group, or individual's names. Looking for a biniou player? --You'll find close to 100 musicians who play this unique bagpipe of Brittany that you can contact. This site seems to have some difficulties, and may not be completely up to date but still useful.

[www.lamusiqueceltique.sparfel.net](http://www.lamusiqueceltique.sparfel.net)

La Musique Celtique, a Breton and Celtic music site with concert dates, group information, song lyrics, sound samples, images, links, etc.

[www.bodadeg-ar-sonerion.org](http://www.bodadeg-ar-sonerion.org)

Bodadeg ar Sonerion, the association of sonneurs - bagpipe and bombard players - and bagadoù in Brittany. Introduces the work of this very influential organization founded in 1943. Includes links to dozens of bagadoù (Brittany's unique bagpipe bands).

[www.cadb.org](http://www.cadb.org)

The Diatonic Accordion Collective of Brittany (CADB). Great place to start in gathering information on the button accordion and its many masters in Brittany, and for practical information on finding teachers, workshops, and music.

[www.diato.org](http://www.diato.org)

The homepage of Bernard Loffet, accordion maker, including music and sound samples and good links to information on accordions and Breton music and musicians more generally.

[www.musictrad.org](http://www.musictrad.org)

MusicTrad, the server for traditional music in France. Includes good list of Breton music and dance links.

[www.trad.org/](http://www.trad.org/)

The page TRAD, with information about traditional music and musical events throughout France, offering the opportunity to sample music.

See also links for Breton Cultural Organizations

## Shopping for Music

See also Books / Publishers for books and magazines

[www.musiquesdebretagne.com](http://www.musiquesdebretagne.com).

The home page of this site will link you directly to six music producers: L'Oz Production, Coop Breizh, Keltia Musique, Keltia III, BNC Productions and Last Exit Records. These sites usually offer a good description of each CD they offer and often sound samples as well to help you select.

[www.brittany-shops.com](http://www.brittany-shops.com)

Boutiques Bretonnes, on-line shopping for everything Breton, from food to art, or furniture.

[www.coop-breizh.fr](http://www.coop-breizh.fr)

The Coop Breizh, founded in 1957, pioneered in distributing Breton books and recordings when the market was limited. Great shops to visit today are found in Rennes and Paris.

[www.keltiamusique.com](http://www.keltiamusique.com)

CD producer and distributor where you can shop on line for CDs as well as books and DVDs.

[www.loz-production.com/](http://www.loz-production.com/)

L'Oz Production, the record label for Didier Squiban, Manu Lann Huel and many others. Site includes a catalog of CDs produced and on-line ordering.

[www.kerig.fr](http://www.kerig.fr)

Kerig Productions produces CDs for a number of musicians and has a nice on-line catalog. Information on the site gives good introduction to performers – musicians and singers of a variety of styles – as well as details on the contents of CDs.

[www.bretagne-musik.de](http://www.bretagne-musik.de)

Part of the website [www.breizh.de](http://www.breizh.de), a German site about Brittany with a strong focus on music. This site includes a large selection of Breton CDs that can be ordered on-line. It's probably best to know some German to order on-line.

[www.bzh-boutique.com](http://www.bzh-boutique.com)

This site offers all sorts of products from jewelry to jeans, crafts and souvenirs.

[www.albumtrad.com](http://www.albumtrad.com)

A website to order CDs (older and new) from Brittany and the world. Each CD is priced at 12.50 euros (much better than most prices you will find for Breton CDs) and the site is accessible in English. You can find information on the content and sound samples for each CD. The CDs are organized by country and instruments and styles – very easy to find what you want. Not a huge selection, but a very interesting one.





## Heard of, but not heard – 16 new CDs from Brittany

Information for these brief descriptions are pulled from *Musique Bretonne* 235 (Apr.May.Jun 2013), *Ar Men* 194 (May Jun 2013), and the Coop Breizh and other websites. Keep in mind that by doing a web search for a musician's name or CD title you can also find a site where you can get good information as well as a sample of the music.



### **Arvest. Bretagne Fest-Noz.**

L'Oz Production.

This is a group well-loved at the fest noz of Brittany where they empower dancing. Kan ha diskan singing is provided by Yves Jego and Yann Raoul and David ar

Porh adds guitar and Aymaric Le Martelot plays piano for a unique sound.



### **Bodadeg ar Sonerion.**

#### **Championnat des Bagadou – Brest Bagadou 2013.**

This is a three-CD set of competition performances by 15 of Brittany's top bagads – The Breton bagpipe band with bombardes, Highland

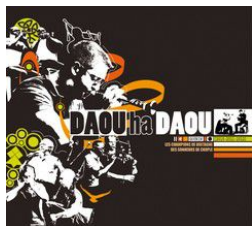
style bagpipes and a drum section (and usually a few other instruments brought in). Contest performances are longer suites of melodies and dances which fully show off the creativity of these ensembles.



### **Bodadeg ar Sonerion.**

#### **Championnat des Bagadou Lorient 2013.**

This is a three CD set with a DVD of 14 bagad performances for the second leg of the championship competition held in August during the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient.



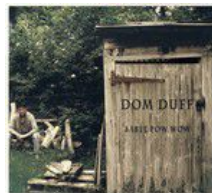
### **Daou ha Daou – concours des sonneurs de couple, Gourin 2010-2011-2012.**

This is a two-CD set of performances by the winners of Brittany's championship for paired playing of bombard with the biniou koz (Brittany's unique

high-pitched bagpipe) and of the bombard and biniou braz (Scottish style bagpipes which Bretons have made uniquely their own). There are 18 selections in all for the categories of marches (more like a slow dance in Brittany), dances and melodies. The best of the best *sonneurs de couple* are captured here.

### **De Ouip en Quap. Veillées en pays de Saint-Brieuc. Chanteurs du pays do Saint-Brieuc enregistrés à Plédran, Saint-Carreuc, Saint-Anne du Houlin et Yffiniac.**

Following the model of work done by groups like Bouèze, L'Epille, and the Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine, the association called De Ouip en Ouap has produced a CD featuring a variety of traditional singers from the area around Saint-Brieuc. These are recordings from veillées – informal evening gatherings – where young and old share a rich oral tradition.



### **Dom Duff. Babel Pow Wow.**

(www.domduff.com)

Dom Duff is a guitarist and singer-song writer whose performance preference is the Breton language. He provides uncompromising commentary of world issues in

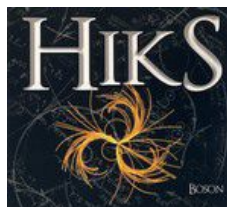
compositions set to music inspired by Breton tradition, but contemporary in swing. This CD pays homage to the hundreds of languages of the world which like Breton are not always given support.



### **Esquisse. Machines Infernales.**

Aremorica Records.

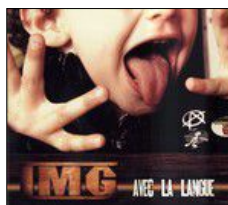
This group performs music for Breton dances but with a jazzy flair. This is the fifth CD by this group which includes François Badeau on button accordion, Gweltaz Herve on saxophones, Pierre Le Normand on drums and Thomas Badeau on clarinet.



### **Hiks. Bosen.**

This is the third CD for this electro-rock group which performs Breton dances (*plinn*, *gavottes*, *scottish*, and others) and includes two songs. The group is made up of Gael Lefèvre, Tann Le Gall

(guitar), Pierre Droual (fiddle), Stéphane De Vito (bass) and Benoit Guillemot (percussions). They are joined on this CD by guest artists Sophie Cavez and Gabriel Yacoub.

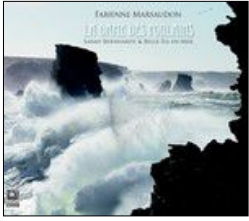


### **IMG. Avec la langue.**

Avel Ouest/Coop Breizh

This is the third CD from this group rooted in traditional music for Breton dances which uses a reggae/ska style to keep things interesting. Here the Gallo

language is used for song and you can dance to songs for the dances *pile menu*, *rond de Saint Vincent*, *Rond de Loudia*, *avant deux*, *laride*, *ride six temps* and others.



**Fabienne Marsaudon. La Dame des poulains – Sarah Bernhardt, Bretonne de Coeur.**

This is a trio with singer Fabienne Marsaudon, pianist Michel Précastelli and cellist Yves-Pol Ruelloux. They use

song and instrumental compositions to evoke summers spent by the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt on the island of Belle-Ile-en-Mer where she had a house called Pointe des Poulains.



**Erik Marchand Ukronia.** Innacor Records INNA 41215

Erik Marchand is a world traveler and mastermind behind the Kreiz Breizh Akademi where musicians explore modal music combining traditional melodies and rhythms

of Brittany with world musics, sometimes with an electric/electronic edge. In this CD Marchand shows off his mastery of the Breton song tradition of Gallo Brittany, working with the Aria Lachrimae Consort directed by Philippe Foulon. Using strings, hand percussion, and wind instruments of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (and before) there is a middle eastern and classical baroque sound to this very interesting combination where Erik Marchand's fine voice is center stage.



**Rok #2 Du – Le compil.**

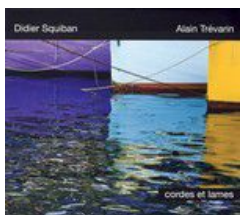
This is the second compilation album of Breton rock bands of the past and present – 18 in all on this CD.



**Siam. Je te mens.** L'Oz Production.

This is a rock group centered around singer and guitar player Bruno Leroux, Songs are in French and while you have the electric sound one expects of a rock group, this CD also has

layers with strings and brass for a varied sound to evoke the night life of the city of Brest.



**Didier Squiban and Alain Trevarin. Cordes et lames.**

Didier Production 02. Pianist Didier Squiban pairs here with accordion player Alain Trevarin with whom he has worked before in new arrangements of Breton

traditional music and compositions with both a classical and jazzy sound.



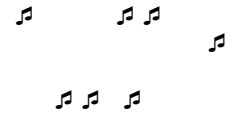
**Rozen Talec and Yannig Noguét. Mouezh an diaoul.**

Traditional singer Rozen Talec pairs with button accordion player Yannig Noguét for 14 selections of Breton language songs – traditional and newly composed for dances or ballads.



**Terre Neuve. Celtic Stereo.**

This CD includes ten songs in French celebrating the Celtic world and touching on other worlds as well.

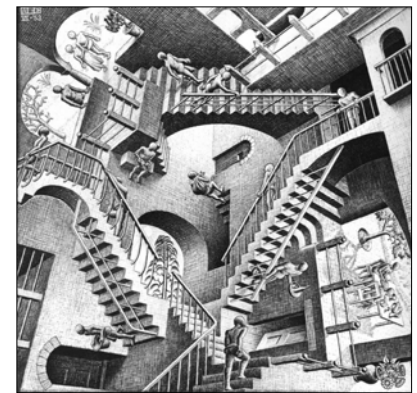


**Deep Inside a Breton Skull - 38 Theory of Relativity Applied to Brittany**

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Einstein, in his theory of special relativity, shows that space and time, without being similar, are interdependent. There is a constant ratio between the measurements of space and time.

- Jean Pierre, what is the link with Brittany?  
- Well, don't be too hasty. I will tell you later about the link between Brittany and special relativity, but I don't know when...



In Brittany, there is a misunderstanding between farmers and environmentalists.

The environmentalists accuse the farmers of transforming Brittany into a garbage bin. The farmers accuse environmentalists of transforming Brittany into a Disneyland for tourists and retired people. That is a serious problem. When people don't understand one another, they cannot build a country together.

When there are only competing material interests, it is possible to find smart solutions. Misunderstanding is much more dramatic. It prevents any normal solution. It can only be set by victory and defeat, with arrogance of the winners and bitterness of defeated on top of that.

Yet, I cannot imagine Brittany without the two parties. My country cannot exist without productive farmers. It cannot exist either without consumers and residents.

Environmentalists raise the issue of pig production and agricultural pollution. I don't speak about Apocalypse whistleblowers; they have the same language in Brittany and in America. Those who are concerned about the future of Brittany offer here specific solutions. The solutions are actions to perform. That seems very logical. But when you listen carefully to our Breton country folk, standards and procedures don't fit to their intellectual software. They face so many hazards that they accomplish a *necessity* marked by contingencies, more than a *work* marked by procedures. Listen to them carefully! They speak of their flock, of the little pigs. They speak about things that nobody can predict: weather, field values, livestock diseases, world prices. Between the farmer and the environmentalist, I feel the same gap as between the pilot of a container ship and the skipper of a sailboat. The first is following procedures. The other, to follow his road, needs something else, more difficult to express, less easy to transmit.

In a conventional conflict of interests, the benefit sought by each other is known. Here is a "cultural" shift, which involves both time and space. And this is why my thoughts lead to space-time and relativity.

Brittany is both space and time, geography and history. The perception of what Brittany is varies among Bretons. American friends, you can say to me that the perception of what is America varies also among Americans...

The Breton of the fields sees Brittany as a place to live. He measures it. He looks at our peninsula, our incredible network of rivers, our fanciful climate, our gentle slopes. He feels the Breton features and the Breton permanence. The Breton of the fields feels good when he is "in his place". This is not an attitude of submission, don't believe that! His place is determined by the *horse of pride* which is running in his skull. Anyway, the challenge for him is location, geography.

The Breton of the cities sees Brittany through a historical course. He feels the past and present. He scans the future. The Breton of the cities feels good when he is trendy, "in the wind", "in the direction of history". He finds the sense of his life through a move. He aims for a target. He has a vivid perception of time.

The Breton of the fields makes Brittany waste time. The Breton of the cities makes Brittany lose his balance. The first considers that speed is a risk for the balance of the country. The second considers that the focus on the balance is a risk for the future. The first wants to be in the right place and at the right time to plant, harvest and

feed the livestock. The second believes in his freedom of action. Freedom is his core value.

The Breton of the fields believes in the eternity of his country, through the renewal of the seasons and generations. The concern of the Breton of the cities is immortality for his country, through action and commitment.

The Breton of the cities is a busy man. Time is important for him. His identity is not linked to a location, but to ambitions. The Breton of the fields is a man of geography, of scope, of distance. His identity is linked to a spot. He can speak tirelessly about those who lived or are living here.

We have, deep in our skull, a geographical and an historical Brittany. To find the ratio between the two Brittanies, it will not be enough to brandish a Gwenn-ha-du, the Breton flag. Einstein's genius will be necessary to combine space and time, so that Brittany will be a common project and a common area altogether. If one of us is not enough, then we will have to gather a group of Bretons who would have the needed intelligence, originality and open mind.

We have to find the equation of the Breton relativity.



## A Travel Account of Brittany from 1869

**Brittany & Its Byways – Some Account of its Inhabitants and its Antiquities; during a residence in that country**, by Mrs. Bury Palliser (London: John Murray, 1869), pp. 269-285

*Editor's note: This is one of my favorite old travel accounts for its detailed descriptions and wonderful illustrations. I have copied a few drawings from an on-line copy of this book, but they are a bit muddy in reproduction here. This particular section of the book I have chosen to present includes not only descriptions of the countryside, but also the well-known tale of the sunken city of Ys (Is) and a description of the Pardon of Sainte Anne-la-Palud. The author finds the people quaint and peculiar but in contrast to many travel book writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mrs. Bury Palliser keeps a positive attitude about the people and places she visits. To situate you a bit in this southwestern corner of Brittany, I have given you a little map at the end of the account.*

... We had a pretty drive from Pont l'Abbé, with occasional views of the Bay of Audierne, extending from Penmarch to the Point du Raz. Midway the horse, going down a steep hill, fell, and we all found ourselves upon the road, but happily unhurt. We met numbers of peasants returning from the fair at Pontcroix; and our

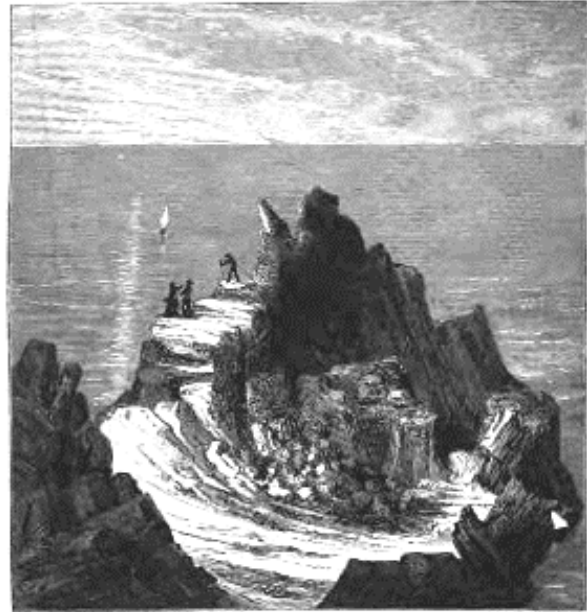
driver, a butcher by trade, coolly stopped the vehicle, to discourse with them on the price of stock, and to handle the sheep they had bought. Our drive was enlivened with occasional peeps of the Bay of Audierne till we reached the little port of that name, the view of which is very pretty. Audierne is approached by a bridge across the river or estuary. At its entrance is a lighthouse, and on the right a sandy bay, with bathing-machines in the season.

The town consists of three streets of cut granite houses, with the name of the builder and the date of their construction inscribed over the door. Fishing is the occupation of the inhabitants, and the table-d'hôte at our comfortable, clean, little inn was plentifully supplied with magnificent john dorys, large red mullet, langoustes, and fish of every description.

From Audierne we took a carriage to visit the Pointe du Raz, a promontory so famous for its rocks and wrecks. We went through a treeless country; near a pretty bay, on the left, is the chapel of Notre Dame-de-Bon-Voyage, destined chiefly for sailors, after which the country becomes more wild, barren, and cheerless. We passed over a bridge which no Breton would dare to cross at night, for fear of being flung by the spirits into the river. According to their belief, a hare appears on the bridge, and terrifies the horses, who throw their rider, and the traveler is dragged by the phantom into the muddy river, where he is kept till morning's dawn, when he is allowed to pursue his way, exhausted with cold, and half dead with fright. They are very superstitious here, as in all Cornouaille. A writer says, "every nation of the earth has its superstitions and absurdities, but Brittany has those of all other nations united." An old woman in a village hard by, said our driver, has never been seen inside the walls of a church; the people say she has sold herself to the evil one, and no one dares go near or speak to her.

On the left is the pretty steeple of the church of Plogoff, situated on an eminence, and dedicated to Saint Collédoc, a Welsh bishop of the sixth century, contemporary of King Arthur, and associated with many of the doings of Queen Guinevre and the knights of the Round Table. Lescoff is the last village we passed through before – after driving over barren plain – we arrived at the lighthouse, built thirty years back at the Pointe.

We walked there to the Pointe, a gigantic and magnificent mass of rocks, eighty feet above the level of the sea. We met with a good-natured woman, who led the young people over the rocks to look down the "Enfer de Plogoff." They had a slippery scramble to reach the hole, a kind of tunnel through which the sea rushes with great violence, so much more terrible than that of Penmarch, that the noise has been compared to the distant roaring of some thousands of wild beasts issuing from the depths of a forest. In the mean time,



206. Pointe du Raz.

we remained seated on the bank enjoying the view. On the south lay the Bay of Audierne, extending in the form of a crescent, the promontories of Penmarch and Raz forming the extreme points. The current, and the numerous rocks of the bay, render it a dangerous coast, formerly peopled by barbarous wreckers, who despoiled the shipwrecked mariners as our Cornish men of old. Opposite the Raz, about seven miles distant, is the Island of Sein, and to the right, the Baie des Trépassés. The island of Sein was anciently the seat of an oracle, interpreted by nine Druidesses, who were versed in every art and science. Moreover, they appear to have been accomplished needlewomen; for a Breton chronicler, giving an account of the coronation of an early king (Erech) at Nantes, describes his mantle as embroidered by these priestesses with figures of Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Music. Their skill in divination caused them to be associated with the fairies; and Morgan – i.e. "born of the sea" – one of these priestesses, who lived in the first century of the Christian era, was famous among the British fairies.

"Avec succès cultivait la magie,  
Morgan de plus, était assez jolie."

Chateaubriand celebrates Velleda, the last of the Druidesses of Sein, tall in stature, her eyes blue, with long fair floating hair, dressed in a short black tunic, without sleeves, bearing a golden sickle suspended from a brazen girdle, and crowned with a branch of oak. Here King Arthur was brought by Merlin to recover of his wounds. The inhabitants of the island were celebrated for their ferocity as wreckers.

The passage between the island and the point or Bec du Raz – "qu'aucun n'a passé sans mal ou sans crainte" – is very dangerous owing to the number of

rocks and the violence of the currents; hence the well-known prayer of the Breton sailor, "Mon Dieu, secourez-moi pour traverser le Raz, car mon navire est petit et la mer est grande." Having no wish to run the risk of being detained at the island by rough weather, we did not attempt the passage.

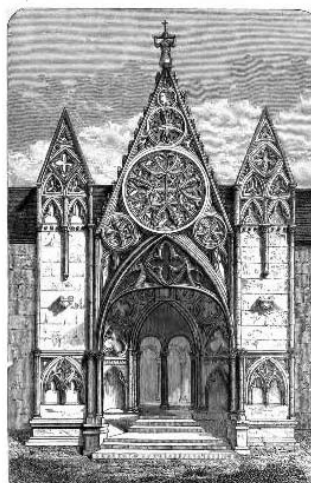
On the desolate shore of the Baie des Trépassés is a piece of water, the etaing de Laoual, site of the city of Is – submerged by Divine vengeance, according to popular tradition, in the fifth century – a place of great commerce, arts, riches, and also of luxury. Gradlon, or Grallo, the king, alone attempted to stem the torrent. Built in the vast basin which now forms the Bay of Douarnenez, it was protected from the ocean by a strong dyke, the sluices only admitting sufficient water to supply the town. King Gradlon kept the silver key (which opened, at the same time, the great sluice and the city gates) suspended round his neck. His palace was of marble, cedar, and gold; in the midst of a brilliant Court sat enthroned his daughter Dahut, a princess who "had made a crown of her vices, and had taken for her pages the seven capital sins." Taking advantage of the sleep of her father, Dahut one night stole the silver key, and instead of opening the city gate, by mistake unlocked the sluices. The King was awakened by St. Guenolé, who commanded him to flee, as the torrent was reaching the palace. He mounted his horse, taking his worthless daughter behind him. The torrent was gaining upon him fast, when a voice from behind called out, "Throw the demon thou carriest into the sea, if thou dost not desire to perish." Dahut felt her strength failing her; the hands that convulsively grasped her father's waist relaxed their hold; she rolled into the water, disappeared, and the torrent immediately stopped its course. The King reached Quimper safe and sound, and that town became afterwards the capital of Cornouaille.

So runs the legend. That a great city once existed in the Bay of Douarnenez admits of no doubt. Besides the religious chronicles of the country, which have preserved the memory of its existence, in the sixteenth century, remains of old edifices were standing at the entrance of the bay, old paved roads have been traced, and walls found under water near the Pointe du Raz.

The tradition of a town thus swallowed up is common among the Celtic race. In Wales, the site of the submerged city is in Cardigan Bay; in Ireland, in Lough Neagh. ...

One of our party went out fishing to the Pointe, and returned well laden with his spoils.

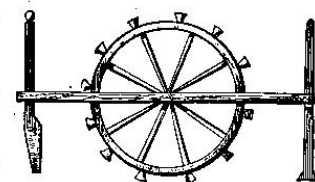
The road from Audierne to Douarnenez passes by Pontcroix, a little town on the same river (Goazien) as Audierne, along which the road runs – a charming drive. It has a magnificent Romanesque church of the twelfth (probably of the fifteenth) century, with a remarkable



17. Front of the Church, Pontcroix.

porch, richly embroidered in quatrefoils and trefoils. A tower in the centre, with octagonal spire is second to none in Cornouaille, except that of Quimper. The arches of the nave are horseshoe, the transepts very narrow. Under the altar of the Lady Chapel is a "Cène," half the size of nature, sculptured in ivory and marble, of marvelous workmanship.

Eleven miles from Douarnenez we stopped to see the pretty little chapel of Notre Dame-de-Comfort, in a hamlet of that name, with light open-work steeple. Attached to one of the arches, on the left of the choir, is a wooden wheel, hung round with bells, to which is attached a long string. It is erroneously called "the wheel of fortune;" but is, in fact, the old wheel of sacring bells in use before the single bell was adopted. The boy who showed us the chapel pulled the string which was fastened to a hook near the altar, and the wheel revolved and rang a merry peal. Formerly there was a little wooden figure attached to the wheel, which performed the same office.



18. Wheel of Sacring Bells, Notre Dame de-Comfort, near Douarnenez.

The road runs round a hill, along an estuary formed by the river, and suddenly the beautiful lake, called the Bay of Douarnenez, bursts on the sight, of a blue as lovely as the Italian seas.

The dirty little town of Douarnenez is charmingly situated to the south of the bay, the hills clothed with trees to the water's edge. The Pointe du Raz forms the western boundary of the bay, and it is shut in to the north by the peninsula of Crozon; its extreme point, Pointe de la Chèvre, advancing nearly midway into the bay. The tide here falls eighteen feet. The triple peaks of the Méné-Hom, one of the Montagnes Noires, is a prominent feature in the view. Islands are scattered over the gulf, and the island of Tristan, retreat of Fontenelle le Ligueur, is so close to Douarnenez, that it may be reached on foot at low water.

The hotel was crammed, gentlemen sleeping on the billiard-table, or littered down in the room of the table-d'hôte: the place was crowded. All the world had flocked to assist at the Pardon of Sainte Anne-la-Palue, which was to take place the following morning. No vehicle was to be had, and we were in despair of being

able to go, when a good-natured voyageur kindly offered to drive us in his carriage – a proposal we thankfully accepted. In all our wanderings we had hitherto never been so fortunate as to see a Pardon, and we were very anxious to go.

The Pardon of Sainte Anne-la-Palue takes place the last Sunday in August, continuing three days, and is one of the most frequented in Finistère.

At Plonevez-Porzun we turned off the Crozon road, and about two miles further arrived at the chapel. The road all the way was lined with peasants walking to the Pardon. The young men of Douarnenez wear blue jackets, embroidered in colours, with rows of plated buttons, the sleeves and waistcoat of a darker blue than the jacket, scarlet sashes, some with plaited bragou bras and shining leather gaiters; but most of them wore trowsers, their hair long, and their hats with two or three rows of coloured variegated chenille. The women had square caps, and aprons with bibs. Those who were in mourning wore light yellow caps, called "bouladins," stained that colour with beeswax or saffron.

St. Anne is a newly-built church, standing on the slope of a down which separates it from the sea, in a perfectly insulated situation. It is only opened once a year for the Pardon. Round it were erected numerous stalls, with toys, epinglettes, and rosaries (chapelets), in heaps for sales; for rosaries must always be purchased at the Pardon to preserve the wearer from thunder and hydrophobia. The great fabric for them is at Angers, where they are made in immense quantities. In the principal manufactory a steam-engine is used for turning the beads; in the others the common lathe. One maker told us she sent annually into Brittany alone rosaries to the value of 800L. There were tents and booths erected for the accommodation of the pilgrims who had arrived the previous day. They eat, drink, and dance in the tents by the day, and sleep on the tables at night.

At ten o'clock, at the ringing of a bell, a procession was formed, consisting of a long line of peasants, preceded by priests and banners, which made the round of the church; the penitents, en chemise to the waist, barefooted, carrying wax tapers in their hands. The penance is sometimes executed by proxy; a rich sinner may, for a small sum, get his penance performed by another. One woman made the round of the church on her knees, telling her beads as she hobbled along. This was in performance of a vow made for some special deliverance.

We proceeded to the top of the hill, from which the beautiful Bay of Douarnenez presented a more lively appearance; fleets of small boats arriving from every direction, and a huge steamer from Brest, which was obliged to land its passengers in small boats, on account of the shallowness of the water.

The appearance of the downs now became very animated, covered with gaily-dressed peasants arranged in groups, sitting or lying on the grass, in every kind of attitude.

At four o'clock the grand procession took place. First came the priests of all the surrounding districts, with the banners and crosses of their parishes; then followed five girls (three and two) in white, carrying a banner, and eight more in similar attire, bearing a statue of the Virgin. Next appeared the banner of Sainte Anne, carried by women in the gorgeous costume of the commune – gowns of cherry-coloured silk, trimmed half up with gold lace, a silver lace scarf, and aprons of gold tissue or rich silk brocade. Under their lace caps was a cap of gold or silver tissue. Four more of these superbly-dressed bearers ("porteuses") carried the statue of Ste. Anne. Girls carrying blue flags walked by their side. Troops of barefooted penitents and shaggy-headed beggars closed the procession, which was followed by a countless train of peasants. It slowly wound its way over the hill, and again descended to the church, where it mingled among the crowds of assembled spectators, which filled the churchyard and

were seated on the steps of the calvary.



16. Vallée de Ste. Anne-la-Palue.

Not far from the church is the holy well of Ste. Anne, where devotees were engaged pouring the holy water over their hands and backs, dipping their children, and testing the miraculous efficacy by various other ablutions.



## **An Introduction to the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)**

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The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 175,000 to 200,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

### **Who are the Members of the ICDBL?**

Some U.S. ICDBL members are of Breton heritage, but the U.S. ICDBL is intended to be a group of "anyone and everyone" showing support for the Breton language rather than an organization for Breton-Americans like so many other "ethnic" organizations in the U.S. We do have quite a few members with Irish, Scottish or Welsh heritage, so there is a strong inter-Celtic element to our work. Most of our members speak neither Breton nor French and most have never been to Brittany. But we all have some reason to help fight for the survival of the Breton language.

### **What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?**

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed throughout the U.S. --from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between—we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

### **Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers**

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language). It's not slick and glossy, but includes 15-20 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. In November 2006 we published our 100<sup>th</sup> issue.

In the 3,000+ pages of **Bro Nevez** produced so far, over 800 books from Brittany have been reviewed or noted, and over 300 Breton music recordings have been reviewed and an additional 800 new releases briefly described.

**The U.S. ICDBL Web Site:**  
[www.icdbl.org](http://www.icdbl.org)

On our website we have published a guide to Breton music (updated in 2006), a guide to learning materials for the Breton language, an introduction to and map of the Celtic languages, a presentation of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools, and two documents presenting the Breton language and why it is endangered and what is being done about it. Bretons themselves have created many great websites to present their country and its culture, and we provide links to a large number of excellent and reliable sites created by Bretons themselves.

### **Other Action**

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

More direct support for the Breton language ...

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan—Breton language immersion schools-- for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Members. We have maintained a personal link with the children of one particular Diwan school—Skol Diwan Landerne—since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school's "godmother."

As is the case for all branches of the ICDBL, our support of the Breton language is mostly symbolic—the fact that outsiders care at all offers encouragement to people in Brittany who are working to sustain the Breton language and find new and creative ways to use it. And we know that this has been noticed and much appreciated in Brittany.

### **PLEASE JOIN US. YOUR SUPPORT SHOWS THE PEOPLE OF BRITTANY THAT THEIR LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORLD**

A yearly membership (including subscription to our newsletter) is just \$20. If you would simply like to subscribe to our newsletter, without becoming a Member, that is also \$20. Make out a check to "**U.S. ICDBL**" and mail it to the address below.

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[www.icdbl.org](http://www.icdbl.org)

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