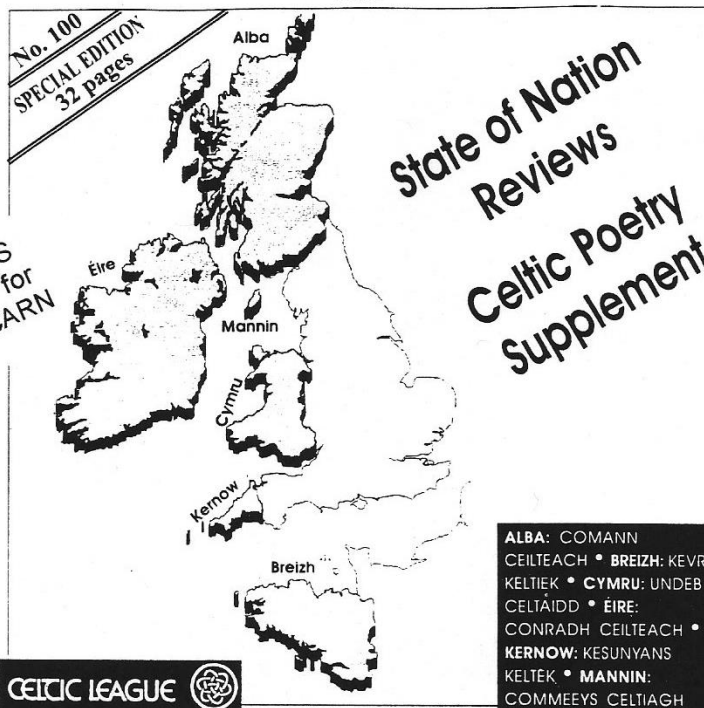


BRO NEVEZ

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



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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 of the U.S. ICDBL and the Canadian Branch of the ICDBL (which also has its own publication called Brittany). **Bro Nevez** 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 Editors. Suggested deadlines for receipt of contributions for Bro Nevez are: January 20, April 20, July 20, and October 20.

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

Membership in the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL includes subscription to Bro Nevez:

Voting Membership:	\$18.00 (calendar year)
Non-Voting Membership:	\$17.00

Subscriptions:	\$15.00 U.S. and Canada first class mail
	\$20.00 overseas by surface mail
	\$25.00 overseas by airmail (printed matter rate)

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany; in some instances we are also very happy to establish an exchange of publications.

NORTH AMERICANS SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE BRETON LANGUAGE

A New Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language is launched in Canada

The ICDBL was first established in 1975 in Brussels, Belgium, to support the repeated demands of Bretons that their native language be given the recognition and place in the schools, media, and public life of Brittany that it needs to survive. The ICDBL was founded by and continues to count on the support of non-Bretons who show through their membership that, while the future of the Breton language does not directly concern them, it is a matter of world importance.

The **U.S. Branch of the ICDBL** was founded in 1981 and publishes a quarterly 35-page newsletter called Bro Nevez (primarily in English with some Breton and French). Membership includes a subscription to Bro Nevez (\$18 for voting membership; \$17 for non-voting membership). Or one can subscribe without being a member (\$15 for U.S./Canada; other destinations: \$20 surface mail; \$25 airmail). The U.S. ICDBL also publishes a number of "working papers" and guides on the Breton language, music, and history. Contact: Lois Kuter, U.S. ICDBL, 169 Greenwood Ave., B-4, Jenkintown, PA 19046, U.S.A. Telephone: (215) 886-6361.

In January 1998, the **Canadian Branch of the ICDBL** was relaunched. This branch of the ICDBL will publishes a newsletter called Brittany (trilingual in English, Breton, French). Canadian Membership including Brittany is \$15 (Canadian dollars). A Canadian Membership which includes both Brittany and Bro Nevez is \$30. A subscription to Brittany without membership is \$10 for the U.S. and Canada and \$20 by surface mail elsewhere. Contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, 58 Century Drive, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 4J6 CANADA (e-mail: jdkoneill@sympatico.ca). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.

Show your support for the Breton language by becoming a member of the U.S. or Canadian Branch. Or subscribe to one or both newsletters to keep up to date on the situation of the Breton language in Brittany, and for a wealth of information on the Breton culture, as well as reviews of new books and recordings.

TELL PEOPLE ABOUT US AND JOIN US!

SHORT NOTES – WHAT’S HAPPENING IN BRITTANY

FRANCE AND REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN THE SCHOOLS

In November, Breton leaders and representatives from major language and cultural associations met with Nicole Péry, Deputy from the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, charged by the Prime Minister of France Lionel Jospin, to report on the teaching of regional languages in France. During three hours, Bretons presented their concerns and hopes for action from the government—with some skepticism about the sincerity of the government’s intentions. Major needs outlined were for France to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as a means to guarantee that Bretons would have access to Breton language classes at all levels of schooling and in the media and public administration. Also demanded was the recognition and establishment of Diwan as part of the public education system, and the establishment of adequate teacher training and teaching posts. The establishment of a Breton language television service was also considered an immediate priority.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION OF BRETON TEACHERS

The Union of Breton Teachers (Unvaniezh ar Gellennerien Vrezhoneg/Union des Enseignants du Breton) was founded in 1982 and is made up of over 200 teachers from the public education system, as well as Brittany’s Catholic schools and the Diwan schools, who want to promote the inclusion of the Breton language in Breton schools. Their annual General Assembly was held in December 1997. With the growth in demands for Breton classes and a growth in enrollment in Breton language programs, the need for teacher training specifically focused on the Breton language and its use as the language of instruction was identified as a high priority, as was the creation of additional teaching posts.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CULTURAL COUNCIL OF BRITTANY

On December 6, 1997, the Cultural Council of Brittany (Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh/Conseil Culturel de Bretagne) held its General Assembly. This Council includes representatives from 42 cultural organizations and federations, from the Regional Council of Brittany, the Economic and Social Council of Brittany, the general Councils of Brittany’s five departments, from the large cities of Brittany (over 30,000 population), and the presidents of Brittany’s four universities.

Two motions were passed unanimously at the December General Assembly. The first urged that France sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The second motion asked that the Department of Loire-Atlantique be administratively reattached to the Region of Brittany to reflect Bretons’ sense of unity and identity.

During 1997 the Cultural Council helped organize and participated in a number of conferences and workshops, including a 20th anniversary recognition of the implementation of the Cultural Charter of Brittany (see the November 1997 issue of Bro Nevez for a quick report). The work of the Council continued to focus on the promotion of Breton language education and increasing the presence of the Breton language in the media. In 1998 the Council will continue to push for the signing of the European Charter and will focus efforts on the establishment of a Breton language television service.

BRETON LANGUAGE RADIO

Radio-Kerne has been working for two years to establish a radio station in Breton which would serve the southern part of Finistère. This January it received approval for a frequency (FM 90.2). with a studio in Plonéis and a staff which is primarily volunteer, the station will start to broadcast in March with programming in Breton on all topics and music of all styles. Now that Radio-Kerne has an official go-ahead, a fund-raising campaign has been launched to help equip the stations. Checks made out the “Radio Bro Gerne” (in French francs) can be sent to its Treasurer: Jean-Yves Le Goff, 44 straed Lost al Lann, 29000 Kemper.

Radio Bro Gwened, which broadcasts in the Vannetais area of Brittany, won permission in December 1997 to expand its signal. This will allow it to reach a much wider audience, including the city of Lorient. Created in 1982, the station has broadcast 24 hours a day since 1984 with one-third of its programming in Breton. With some 1,500 hours of Breton-language programs in its archives, the station has an incredible resource of spoken Vannetais Breton and is working with Dastum Bro Ereg to copy and inventory the programs which Dastum can then make available for public use. To fund its expansion, Radio Bro Gwened also welcomes contributions: Radio Bro Gwened, straed Roland Dorgelès, B.P. 186, 56300 Pondi.

Radio Bretagne Ouest celebrates its 15th birthday and success in capturing a wide and large audience in Finistère. One of 37 regionally focused radios spun off from Radio-France, RBO is one of the most popular. While it broadcasts 14 hours a week in the Breton language (16% of its air time), RBO can only be picked up in the western part of Brittany.

BRETON LANGUAGE TELEVISION ... STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

Thanks to France 3, Bretons in western Brittany receive 65 minutes a week of Breton language programming (those in the eastern half get just 40 minutes a week). “Du-mañ du-se” is a 40-minute broadcast each Sunday at 11:45, and “An Taol Lagad” is a short news program broadcast Monday through Saturday at 12:20. The relatively tiny amount of Breton language programming in Brittany (just 65 minutes a week of Breton vs. 35 hours of Welsh a week in Wales or 100 hours of Catalan a week in Catalonia) has led to a number of petitions from Breton organizations and some Bretons have refused to pay television tax.

Recognition for Creativity in the Breton Language

This past December 1997, the television station France 3-Ouest (at the initiative of Fanch Broudig) held an awards ceremony aired on its Breton-language program “Du-mañ du-se” for outstanding work in the Breton language. Nine prizes were awarded based on the decision of a jury of well qualified Breton language speakers from a variety of backgrounds—teachers, TV producers like Broudig, students, and writers. It is worth citing the winners and nominees since these are definitely names to keep an eye on.

Best Journalism in Breton: Per Salaun for his articles published in *Le Tregor*; Also nominated were Herve ar Beg (for programming on Radio Kreiz Breizh), and Lionel Buannic and Serve Lenault (for reporting done for the TV program “An Tal Lagad,” FR3-Iroise).

Short Notes – continued

Best Musical Group using Breton: Annie Ebrel and Dibenn for their CD Dibenn (An Naer Production). Also nominated were Manu Lann Huel (for songs on CD Live/An Tour Tan) and Yann Fañch Kemener (for CD Kan ha Diskan).

Best Theater Performance in Breton: Sylvain Kenoa for his role in Testamant ar C'hi (performed by the troupe Teatr Brezhoneg Penn-ar-Bed). Also nominated were Jaekz ar Borgn (for role in Ar Mestr with Strollad ar Vro Bagan) and Bob Simon (also in Ar Mestr).

Best Book in Breton: Youenn Gwernig for An Dornad plu (see review in Bro Nevez 63). Also nominated was Yann Vadezour Lagadeg (for Keit ha ma vo esperañs).

Best Translation in Breton: Martial Menard for the first CD-Rom in Breton, Teo, Leo ha Manda (published by An Here). Also nominated were Divi Kervella (for the translation of the Tintin album Afer Klaskato) and Herve ar Bihan, Gwendal Denez, A. Botrel and Art-J. Hughes (for their translation of Irish language poet Cathal Ó Searcaigh)

Best Study of the Breton Language: Francis Favereau for his grammar of contemporary Breton (published by Skol Vreizh). Also nominated were Gwenole Bihannig (for his geography book Douaroniezh Breizh) and Mark Kerrain (for his beginner's learner Ni a gomz Brezhoneg)

Best Children's Book in Breton: Malo ar Menn and Yann-Fañch Jacq for the series Wanig ha Wenig (Edition Keit Vimp Beo). Also nominated were Geneviève Huret, Loïc Jouannot (for the album Nijadenn ar re Dro-Heol; translation by Herve Seubil-Kernaodour), and Jean-Pierre Idate (for Boubam hag an tamtam; transl. by Jean-Claude Le Ruyet and Camille Ollivier).

Best Film in Breton: Gurvan Musset and Herve Morzadec for CLB24 (for FR3-Ouest). Also nominated were Thierry Compain (for Kan ar piker mein, FR3-Ouest) and CREA Rennes (animation Roje ar C'hilhog)

Best Breton Speakers of the Year: The 12 high school students of Diwan who had 100% success on the Baccalaureat exams. Also nominated were the restaurant Quick in Quimper for signs and use of Breton by staff, and Jean-Marie Jacq for his announcements in Breton in Paris-Brest flights of Air-Inter Europe.

DIWAN'S 20th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Diwan will be throwing a big party to celebrate 20 years of work and sucks in creating Breton language schools for Brittany. The festival will take place in the town of Morlaix on May 8, 9 and 10, and I hope to have some more details for the May issue of Bro Nevez. If you will be travelling to Brittany in May and want to go to the festival, please let me know and I can work on getting some details in advance. It would be wonderful to have some representatives of the U.S. or Canadian Branches of the ICDBL at the festival to personally deliver a message of congratulations!

LETTERS TO THE U.S. ICDBL

Landerne, d'ar 24 a viz Kerzu 1997

Dear Lois Kuter,

Thanks very much for your letter with its news of the U.S. ICDBL and the enclosed check.

It's very inspiring to know that people living so far away should take such an interest in our work and I do hope that you will be able to join us for the 20th Anniversary Celebration. It's going to take place in a very favourable context: we gained 250 pupils in September and all the signs are that things are on the move. Our first bacheliers were chosen as Breton-speakers of the year yesterday at the first Awards Ceremony for Breton Culture organized by the regional television channel, FR3. I am off to see the President of the Regional Council tomorrow: they are going to help us put together a financial package of 1.6 million francs for the new lycée in Carhaix. The next big project will be a college [middle school] in Morbihan, hopefully for 1999, though we still have a lot of footwork to do.

I will of course ensure that Skol Landerne gets its share of the check: its former president, Philippe Oillo, is now working with me in the bureau of Diwan Breizh and I am sure he would wish to join me in sending you our warmest Christmas greetings.

Yours ever,

Andrew Lincoln,
Prezidant Diwan

Zwevegem, January 27, 1998

Dear Lois:

Thank you so much for sending me at regular times a copy of *Bro Nevez*. Each time, the newsletter contains most valuable information and I really wonder how you succeed in collecting and editing it in such a sustained way.

The information is so worthwhile that I will deposit my whole collection of *Bro Nevez* in our local Municipal Library, which is connected to the network of all Flemish public libraries, so that it can be consulted throughout Flanders. But I was very astonished to see that my #10 is missing. I don't know how I could be so careless. Would it be possible to send me a new or a photostatic copy? [done – L.K.] Thank you in advance for your willingness to complete the set.

I seize the opportunity to let you know my forthcoming actions. Before end March a new anthology of Breton contemporary poetry will be published, *N'em eu lec'h all ebet/Ik heb geen ander land* (meaning *I have no other country or place*), this time not only with Dutch translations, but also with the Breton original text. There will be 130 poems, written by 32 poets. Moreover, together with the anthology we'll make a compact disk with 19 of those poems read by Naig Rozmor and Bob Simon in Breton, and by Marie-Thérèse Van Dijke, Hilde Velge and Eugène Delabie in Dutch translation. The original backing music is composed by Guido Desimpelaere. Its name will be *Mouezhioù bev/Levende stemmen* (*Living voices*). Americans who would like to know more about both products can contact the publisher: Kruispunt, Boeveriestraat 8, B-8550 Brugge, Belgium. Their price is not yet fixed, but will be comparable to that of other books and compact disks over here.

I wish you an utmost prosperous 1998 and hope that *Bro Nevez* will continue its irreplaceable activity for the Breton art and culture. Good luck!

Jan Deloof
Zwevegem, Belgium

[Editor's Note: Jan Deloof is the head of the Flemish branch of the ICDBL and has published several collections of Breton poetry translated into Flemish. This past December he served as Honorary President of the fifth *Salon du livre multilingue du livre jeunesse* (*Exhibition of multilingual books for youth*) held in Quimper.]

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CELTIC LEAGUE

The following "Press release" is from Alan Heusaff, International Branch Secretary for the Celtic League.

CARN, Special Issue No. 100

For the past twenty-five years, the Celtic League, founded in 1961 to further the development of relations between the six Celtic countries, has published a 24-page quarterly, CARN, in which three-fourths of the space is in English, the remainder being shared between the Celtic languages. It gives news of the movements which aim to obtain or secure the freedom necessary for these nations to maintain their identity and to restore their languages to a viable position.

CARN No. 100 (winter '97-'98) is a special issue of 32 pages of which 24 are devoted to general surveys in English of the present state of each nation regarding its aspirations to self-government, (Ireland being sovereign in most of its territory is a special case), its language and culture.

Comprehensive assessments show that while encouraging steps are being taken towards self-government in Scotland and Wales and a solution of the Northern Ireland problem, and progress is being achieved in each country in areas of the linguistic struggle, the Celtic languages risk disappearing as the everyday means of communication of well-knit communities. This is already the case for Breton which remains subject to the unrelenting pressure of a centralist State.

This issue carries an eight-page supplement devoted to samples of Celtic poetry. Eighteen poems written in the six Celtic languages are given with translations arranged in such a way that those in a Gaelic language are translated into a Brittonic language, and vice versa.

Copies can be obtained by sending 4 or U.S. \$6 airmail to Alan Heusaff, Seana Gharráin, An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe, Éire (Ireland).

* * *

Editor's Note: While we have included news of the Celtic League frequently in the pages of Bro Nevez, it is worth bringing your attention to their excellent magazine called Carn. As described above this features the six Celtic nations and includes up to date information on the efforts of these nations to maintain or gain political, economic, social and cultural independence. This special No. 100 of Carn includes an excellent overview of the state of the Celtic languages. The pages of Carn regularly offer a wonderful forum for ideas—expressed in the Celtic languages as well as English. And this magazine includes news you simply will not get through any other medium ... except perhaps the Celtic League Web Site – a sample of which follows (which I have rearranged so that it fits on two pages instead of three).



Hosted by the Manxman Domain

The Celtic League is an inter-celtic organisation that campaigns for the social, political and cultural rights of the Celtic nations, as set out in the aims and objectives. The organisation produces a high quality quarterly magazine, CARN which carries articles in all the Celtic languages plus English.

The Celtic League should not be confused with The Celtic Congress although the two organisations share many common objectives.

There is a Celtic newsgroup, soc.culture.celtic and other newsgroups linked from the other pages. Angus Og holds a comprehensive list of Celtic Links.

Carn 100

Newest items (22-02-98)

New since 2nd January, 1998

Older Press Releases, Articles, News Items

1996 A.G.M. Resolutions (adopted) - 15-08-96

Assorted Links

Branch Information

<u>Alba: Comann Ceilteach 11-03-97</u>	<u>Breizh: Kevre Keltiek 15-08-96</u>
<u>Cymru: Undeb Celtaidd 15-08-96</u>	<u>Éire: Conradh Ceilteach 01-01-97</u>
<u>Kernow: Kesunyans Keltek 13-03-97</u>	<u>Mannin: Commeeys Celtiagh 13-03-97</u>
<u>Central Campaigns 01-01-97</u>	<u>Carn Magazine 02-04-97</u>

Membership and Subscriptions

International Branch

Alan Heusaff,
Seana Gharráin,
An Spidéal,
Co. na Gaillimhe,
Éire.

England Branch

Ivor Kenna,
72, Compton Street,
London.

American Branch

PO Box 20153,
Dag Hammarskjold Postal Center,
New York,
NY 10037.

Aims of The Celtic League

The fundamental aim of the Celtic League is to contribute, as an international organisation, to the struggles of the six Celtic nations to secure or win their political, cultural, social and economic freedom. This includes:

- ☐ - fostering co-operation between Celtic peoples.
- ☐ - developing the consciousness of the special relationship and solidarity between them.
- ☐ - making our national struggles and achievements better known abroad.
- ☐ - campaigning for a formal association of Celtic nations to take place once two or more of them have achieved self-government.
- ☐ - advocating the use of the national resources of each of the Celtic countries for the benefit of all its people.

These aims are pursued by non-violent means.

The Role The Celtic League in Our National Struggles

On an internal level, the role of the Celtic League is secondary to that of the national organisations which work for the rebuilding of our respective nations as fully integrated communities. At an inter-Celtic level we should promote exchanges and facilitate acquaintance of people from different Celtic countries with one another to strengthen our solidarity. On the external level, we should let other peoples know that the Celts are determined to assert their nationhood and that they have original contributions to make to the achievement of more satisfactory relations between individuals and Nations. We are non sectarian.

Each Celtic nation is conditioned by a different history and so we must not expect uniformity of thought but instead allow diversity to express itself within the Celtic League. In this way, we may better recognise those areas of possible co-operation and eventually formulate a detailed common policy. With this we can work out which kind of relations between our communities will enable them to enjoy freedoms and liberties at both individual and community level.

For more information, contact:

**Bernard Moffatt,
General Secretary to the Celtic League,
11, Hilltop View,
Braddan,
Mannin,
British Isles.
IM2.**

or

**Mark Kermode, Assistant General Secretary,
e-mail mkermode@mcb.net**

e-mail B.Moffatt@advsys.co.im



CELTIC LEAGUE AMERICAN BRANCH
Box 20153 Dag Hammarskjold Center
New York, NY, 10017

A CELTIC CALENDAR FOR A CELTIC YEAR

Everyone interested in Celtic civilization can now follow the course of the Celtic year with a 1998 Celtic Calendar. Published by the Celtic League American Branch, this is a calendar of the traditional Celtic year, beginning with Celtic New Year's Day on November 1st.

The calendar goes on to divide the progress of the year according to the traditional series of Celtic festivals: Imbolg on February 1st, Beltaine on May 1st, and Lughnasadh on August 1st. There are complete explanations of these festivals, and in addition over 700 other anniversaries of important Celtic people and historic events are given, spanning over 2000 years of Celtic history, from olden times right up to the present day.

Each month is illustrated with original black-and-white artwork illustrating stories from Celtic myths and legends, with a descriptive caption. The name of the month and the days of the week are given in one of the six modern Celtic languages: Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Breton, Cornish or Manx. And an original, sometimes pithy proverb from that language with an English translation.

A veritable almanack of Celtic culture, the Celtic Calendar is available in Celtic book and gift stores or for \$10 (postpaid) from: Celtic League Calendar, 2973 Valentine Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10458.



**an historical and mythological calendar representing
the Celtic Year: November 1, 1997 to October 31, 1998**

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CANADIAN BRANCH OF THE ICDBL

For Brittany/Bretagne/Breizh

The First issue of the Candian ICDBL Newsletter

Jeffrey O'Neill has been working hard to launch a new Canadian Branch of the ICDBL and has produced the first issue of its newsletter called Brittany. Like Bro Nevez, this is photocopied—not slick, but attractive. But Jeffrey O'Neill has had the good idea of adding an attractive cover page and stiff backing with spiral binding so that Brittany has some real substance! Like Bro Nevez, the word “newsletter” is not quite right, since both publications are more like magazines in their content, with news and articles about Brittany.

Here's what you find in this first 29-page issue of Brittany which is bilingual English/French, with Breton to be incorporated in future issues.

- A Note on Yann Plunier (1924-1997) who first initiated the ICDBL in Canada.
- An essay on Bretons in Canada.
- A number of charts and graphs showing the progression of the Diwan schools and bilingual education in Brittany
- Maps of Brittany showing the principal dialects of the Breton language (adapted from Jackson 1967) and the changes in location and percentage of Breton speakers in western Brittany.
- An introduction to Diwan and a call for donations to the Diwan Schools
- A short article on the potential for a Breton language university.
- An article (with lots of good maps) on Early Brittany
- A note on Komite Breizh Europa Karta—efforts in Brittany to get France to adopt the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- A nice presentation of the ICDBL, and a list of all the branches and their representatives.
- A poem in each of the six Celtic languages: Scottish Gaelic, Breton, Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Manx and Cornish

This is a substantial publication and I hope it will be effective in attracting a large Canadian membership to the ICDBL. Be reminded that U.S. ICDBL members are welcome to subscribe to Brittany (see the information at the front of this issue of Bro Nevez).

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM BRITTANY

Learning Materials for the Breton Language

I have not seen the following materials but have been able to piece together information based on reviews and notes found primarily in the Breton magazines *Bretagne des Lettres* and *Keleier Servij ar Brezhoneg*. – Lois Kuter

Mark Kerrain. Ni a gomz brezhoneg. TES, 1997. (30 rue Brizieux, 22015 Saint Breiuc; 02 96 68 14 50). 98 francs for the book; 199 with CD.

TES was created in 1993 by the Regional Council of Brittany and the Rectorat d'Académie to produce Breton language materials for use in schools. Its publications are distributed free of charge to public, Catholic, and Diwan schools in all five departments of Brittany. So far, it has published 18 books, recordings and videos, with another 13 in view.

This new method by Mark Kerrain is aimed for beginning learners of Breton and is modeled on British and Welsh books. The unique aspect of this new book (and a trend that will no doubt become regular) is that it comes with a CD Rom, with the voices of singers such as Anne Auffret and Annie Ebrel in speaking roles.

Gwenole Bihannig. Douaroniezh Breizh. Relecq Kerhuon: An Here. 1997, 130 francs.

Gwenole Bihannig is a Diwan teacher at the middle school in Relecq Kerhuon (near Brest) and builds on his university research to create a geography book in the Breton language for middle school levels. The focus is on human geography (demography, economy, etc) and the text is abundantly illustrated with photos, maps and graphs.

Martial Menard. Expressions populaires bretonnes. Spezet: Coop Breizh, 1997. ISBN 2-909924-93-9. 60 pages. 40 francs.

This little book of 60 popular expressions cannot be described as a text for Breton students, but it does provide insight into the Breton language. The expressions are those Menard has collected during the past decade from Breton speakers and the book does not lack humor or spice.

Patrick ke Besco. Parlons breton, langue et culture. L'Harmattan. 212 pages. 120 francs.

The author of this book teaches Breton in a preschool in Rennes and also teaches a weekly evening class for adult Breton speakers. He has conducted scholarly investigation of the dialects of Breton of Belle-Ile-en-Mer and Pont-Scorff, but this book is for the layman. The aim of the book is to show how the Breton language is put together, describing its origins, history and relation to other Celtic languages. Topics include dialects and the cultural roots of vocabulary as well as oral and written literature—ancient and modern. There is a strong pedagogical element with a section on grammar, orthography and pronunciation.

J.-M. Normant. Lexique breton-français. Nouvelle méthode pour faciliter aux commençants l'étude de la langue bretonne. Lacour-Ollé Editions. 88 pages. 100 francs.

This is a reprint of a work from 1902 designed to help beginning students of Breton look up words—by getting around the change of the first letter through mutation.

Yann-Erwan Abalan. Poelladennoù Herve ha Nora 2. Lesneven: Mouladurioù hor Yezh. 1997. 205 pages. ISBN 2-86863-097. 58 francs

This is a booklet with over 1000 exercises to accompany the text for Breton learners called Herve ha Nora (vol. 2). Nicely illustrated, this is a key supplement to students using those texts in classes or for self-study.

New Publications in the Breton Language

Breizh e Penn ar Bed/Bretagne en Finistère. Special supplement to Ouest France, December 11, 1987. 48 pages.

To showcase the wealth of cultural expression in the Finistère area of Brittany the newspaper Ouest France put out a special 48-page edition on December 11. Thanks to the work of Diwan teachers-in-training at the training center called Kelenn, a version entirely in Breton is also available (including all the advertising). Ample illustrated with color and black and white photos, the short articles in this special newspaper edition profile artists and performers, and provide commentary on Brittany's rich cultural scene, including theater, dance, art, cuisine, traditional sports, cinema, festivals, radio and television, education, publishing, and cultural organizations. This is a wonderful window on the vitality of Breton culture in a wide range of expressions.

* * *

Like the learning materials noted above, the following books have not been seen, but notes are pulled from a variety of listings and reviews in Breton publications.

Yvon Krog. Ul labous a varver. Relecq Kerhuon: An Here (Collection "Skol al louarn"). 1997. 60 pages. ISBN 2-86843-171-2. 45 francs.

This is a children's book telling a tale of ruse to cut off the beard of Mr. Fistoulis.

Hergé. Afer Kaskato. Translated by Divi Kervella. Relecq Kerhuon: An Here (Collection "Tintin"). 1997. 60 pages. ISBN 2-86843-169-0. 53 francs.

This is one of a growing number of Tintin adventures (L'Affaire Tournesol) translated into Breton.

Grimm Brothers. Marvailhoù Grimm. Relecq Kerhuon: An Here (Collection "Skol al louarn"). 1997. 140 pages. ISBN 2-86843-170-4. 55 francs.

This is a collection of ten lesser-known Grimm tales translated into Breton.

Per Denez. Pa ne varver ket en aner. Lesneven: Hor Yezh. 1997. 180 pages. ISBN 2-910699-24-2.

A novelist in his own right, Per Denez here translates foreign short stories and texts into Breton.

Dastumad Pengwern. Lesneven: Hor Yezh. (Collection "Gwerin" 8), 1997. 160 pages. ISBN 2-910699-23-4.

This is a collection of songs and texts collected in Brittany and published in the early 1960s.

Abbé Marion. Magazin Speredel, levrenn III. Imbourc'h no. 325-326. 1997, 112 pages. 80 francs.

This is a collection of religious writings directed to rural populations and artisans edited in Vannes in 1790.

Robert Louis Stevenson. Enez an teñzor. Brest: Al Liamm. 1997. 232 pages. ISBN 2-7368-0051-6. 75 francs.

This is the Breton translation by Yeun ar Gow of the classic book Treasure Island.

Konstantinos Kafavis. Barzhonegoù. Translation by Alan Botrel. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh (Collection "Skrid"). 1997. 240 pages. ISBN 2-86863-100-2. 85 francs.

For this translation of poems by one of Greece's major poets, Alan Botrel won a coveted Prix Langleiz.

The collection includes 154 poems by Konstantinos Kafavis (1863-1933).

Cathal Ó Searcaigh. Distreñ d'ar Gêr/An Bealach 'na Bhaile. Translation by Herve ar Bihan, Gwendal Denez and Art J. Hughes. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh (Collection "Skrid"). 1997. 97 pages. ISBN 2-86863-101-0. 60 francs.

This is a collection of Irish poems translated into Breton in a bilingual Irish/Breton collection.

Lan Tangi. Mousafir. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh (Collection "Skrid"). 1997. 91 pages. ISBN 2-86863-099-5. 60 francs.

Lan Tangi is one of Brittany's most noted young poets, and this collection of his work is inspired by his travels to the four corners of the world.

Kristian Brisson. Lapous an donvor. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1997. 129 pages. ISBN 2-86863-098-7. 70 francs.

This is a collection of short stories related to the sea which has been recommended as a good book for Breton learners.

* * *

Speaking of Poetry

At the 15th "Rencontres poétiques internationales de Bretagne" held in St. Malo this November the "Imram" prize for Breton language work was awarded to Tudual Huon for his poetry, short stories and "comic books" in the Breton languages. Also a painter, Tudual Huon works with his father Ronan Huon to publish Al Liamm, the prestigious revue for Breton language literature.

Poellgor an Tarv – A Meeting of the Breton Language and Art

Poellgor an Tarv (Academie du Taureau/Academy of the Bull) has the aim of linking Breton language expression with art, promoting bilingualism through its presence in art shows and events. Just as music has been an area for great creative expression through the Breton language, this new "academy" hopes that painting and sculpture might be inspired by Breton language poetry and writing. This group will promote the collaboration of artists and Breton writers, and is organizing an assembly of creative talents in September 1998 to include the painters B. Louedin, A. Le Nost, J. F. Chaussepied, Tamber and J. Fournier and the sculptor A. Kito. The organizers of the event are also painters and sculptors: G. Jullien, A. Le Sec'h, P.J. Le Morvan and J.F. Coatanlem. The exhibit space will include the presentation of texts and poems in both French and Breton by writers such as J. A. Guénégan, J. P. Kermarrec, Per ar Bihan, Naig Rozmor, Annaig Renault, Glenmor and Per-Jakez Hélias.

Poellgor an Tarv welcomes not only artists and writers, but anyone interested in supporting this new gathering of talent. The address for more information is:

Poellgor an Tarv, Ti-Ker Gwimaeg
Mairie de Guimaec, 29620 GUIMAEAC

A New Anthology of Celtic Poetry – A Clarification

In my presentation of Writing the Wind: A Celtic Resurgence in Bro Nevez 64 (November 1997), I erroneously indicated that this anthology of Celtic poetry included the original version of each poem in the Celtic language as well as an English translation. I was working from a photocopy of just part of the book to write the presentation. In fact, a significant number of the poems (about one-third) have the original text, but not all—the book would need to be a thousand pages and not just a hefty 333!

This in no way diminishes the importance of this wonderful collection of poetry by 56 poets from all six of the Celtic speaking nations: Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. And all six of the Celtic languages are represented in the poems.

In case you missed the presentation in the last issue of Bro Nevez, here is the full citation for the collection:

Writing the Wind: A Celtic Resurgence. Edited by Thomas Rain Crowe with Gwendal Denez and Tom Hubbard. New Native Press, 1997. 333 pages. ISBN 1-883197-12-0.

The book is available for \$17.57 (including postage) from "New Native Press" (P.O. Box 661, Cullowhee, NC 28723).

* * *

RUSSIANS AND THE BRETON LANGUAGE

It looks like Russia has the means to create a new branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language. In the past few months, articles in the newspapers Le Telegramme and Ouest France have profiled two Russians who have been drawn to Brittany by the Breton language and traditional song. They have not only learned the Breton language, but are teaching it to others and bridging cultures through translation work.

Anna Mouradova

The following is a translation by Mary Turner of the article "Anna the Russian is a professor of Breton" by Yves Drévilhon, from Le Télégramme, 2/16/98 (from the Le Telegramme internet site).

A 25 year old Muscovite gives courses in Breton to a dozen students at the school of arts in the Russian capital. Her name, Anna. Same as the patron saint of Armorica. Destiny? An amazing encounter, almost surreal. Difficult to imagine that the younger generation of this far-away land, rather hyped by the opening up of their economy, could interest themselves in a regional language of France that is not even in common everyday use. Not totally incomprehensible however, in a city that is rapidly "western-izing" and "American-izing", where some of the young people fear losing their cultural identity. Anna Mouradova draws from a new rooting in the Celtic culture, and more precisely the Breton culture.

The songs of Kemener

The Armorican artist Yann-Franch Kemener will be quite astonished to learn that the influence of his songs reaches all the way to Russia. At the faculty of arts of Moscow, Anna teaches her students "un ejen n'eo ket un azenn" ("a steer is not an ass," from a Kemener song).

Breton is not, of course, a part of the university program; only passion has guided these students to dive in. And with visible delight. Natasha, 19, student of French, is part of the Breton team and confided to us that she is waiting impatiently for next summer when she will travel to Finistère, to Scaër, object of all her dreams.

And how did Anna learn of the existence of this land, lost in the mists at the far west of France? This goes back a dozen years. It was first through the music that she imagined the waves crashing against the cliffs. Anna had always shown a great interest in languages and, curiously, for Celtic culture. A friend in Moscow directed her towards Breton.

A Masters at Rennes

At the time, she was in high school in the capital, where she had chosen French as her primary language. "I was the only one interested in Breton, which I was learning from books, and I took an immediate liking to it" she recalls.

To such an extent that in her second year at the school of arts, she decided to pursue her studies at the University of Rennes. She obtained a scholarship thanks to the aid of the Cultural Institute of Brittany.

Finally on her way to Brittany. Her eyes sparkle with joy as she recounts her first trip. At the University of Rennes, she registered in the third year in the department of Breton and Celtic studies. For her master's thesis, she chose a theme that was, at the very least, unusual: how to translate Russian into Breton.

This posed quite a few problems for her thesis advisor, who did not know a word of Russian. She got an "A".

Anna didn't come to Brittany just to study. She hoped to discover the Brittany of people, of Celtic monuments and of the fest-noz. She has a real nostalgia for this, for the dance steps of fisel, of gavotte and the kan-ha-diskan. Last summer she spent some time at Locmariaquer.

Bigouden country

Of her stay in Brittany, she retains powerful memories. She speaks first of all about her friends in Pont-l'Abbé, a part of Bigouden country that she found "fantastic". There, she gossiped with "the old women in coiffes". But it was, on the other hand, very difficult for her to chat with the people of Quimper "who speak a very different Breton".

On her return to Moscow, Anna pursued her studies. She is now a professor of French at the 'école superior' of commerce and international relations in Moscow. For the last year she has also given courses in Breton.

She has maintained her ties with Brittany, since she contributes to the literary revue 'Al Liamm,' writing there in Breton of everyday life in Russia.

And she is preparing for next month a translation in Breton of a book by a Russian writer, about the second world war, which will be published by the editor 'Hor Yezh'.

More Breton than Anna? Impossible to find in Moscow. She can't come to Brittany this summer with her husband because they are awaiting their first child. Another time.....

Andre Markowicz

The article which follows describes the work of André Markowicz, a translator of Russian with a specialty in the works of Dostoïevski, who is working with Breton poet Koulizh Kedez on an anthology of Breton/Russian poems. Markowicz was first lured to Breton through the singing of Yann Fañch Kemener and admits that although he "sings like a pot" ("chante comme une casserole") he does it joyfully in the Breton language.



Ces "Bretons" venus d'ailleurs

Ouest France
Dec. 29, 1997

Certains sont là depuis sept ou dix ans. D'autres ne font que passer. Mais ils ont tous en commun de venir d'ailleurs — d'au-delà des mers ou des frontières — et d'avoir fait leur trou sur cette terre bretonne qu'ils ont parfois abordée avec un peu d'étonnement et qu'ils parcourent avec ravissement. Un peu à la manière des gens d'ici qui, poussés par le hasard ou la nécessité, s'en allaient autrefois à la découverte de contrées loin-

taines... Hommes d'affaires ou enseignants, artistes ou paysans, chefs d'entreprise ou sportifs, ils sont aujourd'hui légion tous ces étrangers qui ont ainsi tracé leur route au milieu de nous. André Markowicz raconte aujourd'hui son aventure: celle d'un intellectuel qui a beaucoup bousillé et qui, spécialiste de Dostoïevski, travaille aujourd'hui à une anthologie de la poésie russe en breton. Une langue qui le fascine.

André Markowicz est traducteur, spécialiste de Dostoïevski

La langue bretonne, le choc de sa vie

André Markowicz est traducteur, spécialisé dans l'œuvre de Dostoïevski, mais il aurait voulu être... chanteur breton. Pour se consoler, il travaille à une anthologie de la poésie russe, en breton. La découverte de cette langue a été pour le Rennais d'adoption le plus grand choc de sa vie.

Si André Markowicz est aujourd'hui planté en Bretagne, ses racines le tirent bien loin de notre musée armoricain, au fin fond des terres de l'Est, dans les entrelacs de l'Histoire. «Ma mère est de langue russe, mi-juive, mi-géorgienne. Elle est née en déportation, en Sibérie, du temps de Staline. Mon père est français, Juif polonais. Ses parents ont été expulsés de Pologne en 1928 parce que mon grand-père était militant communiste. Ceia leur a sauvé la vie. Mes grands-parents avaient comme langues le yiddish et le polonais. Mais s'ils parlaient yiddish entre eux, ils ne discutaient avec mon père qu'en français. Ils avaient une grande idée de l'intégration. Ils ont demandé la nationalité française juste après la guerre.»

Une langue énorme

André est né en 1960, à Prague. Avant que son journaliste de père ne déménage la famille à Moscou, de 1961 à 1964, puis à nouveau à Paris. «La première langue que j'ai entendue était donc le russe.» Avec ce passé, André pouvait difficilement être dernier de la classe en langues. Il est devenu traducteur. «J'ai toujours été entre le français et le russe. J'ai donc toujours traduit.» Ses études de lettres passent par la Sorbonne et ses temps libres par la littérature: auteurs français en français, auteurs russes en russe. «Je ne trouvais jamais dans les textes russes traduits en français l'intonation du russe, alors que c'était cela qui m'intéressait, c'est-à-dire entendre la voix des

Chaque jour à la même heure, André Markowicz s'installe à la table d'un café de la place Ste-Anne à Rennes. C'est là que, pour se détendre de la traduction de l'intégrale de Dostoïevski, il traduit Shakespeare... et rêve d'être chanteur breton.



gens. Et même si la traduction était en beau français, cela restait plat, peu vivant. La littérature, ce n'est pas seulement le texte, mais aussi les émotions autour, c'est-à-dire la vie du peuple qui les porte. Le traducteur est un passeur entre les cultures.» Et les Editions Babel/Actes Sud ont choisi le passeur Markowicz pour traduire les œuvres complètes de Dostoïevski: 10000 pages, 33 volumes. «Je traduis également du théâtre. Mais que du russe. Du Shakespeare aussi.»

Et la Bretagne dans tout ça? La Bretagne... «J'y suis venu enfant, en touriste. Puis, il y a une dizaine d'années, à Guingamp, pour aider une amie, qui est aujourd'hui, ma compagne, à avancer sa thèse. Françoise m'a fait écouter les chants bretons de Yann-Fañch Kemener. Le plus grand choc de ma vie. J'y découvrais non seulement une langue magnifique, énorme, mais un monde d'une noblesse infinie qui s'exprimait dans cette voix. Une notion reposée de la fatalité. Une mélancolie non doulou-

reuse. Je sentais un invraisemblable rapport avec la littérature russe. J'avais l'impression de connaître cette langue depuis toujours, parce qu'elle venait du plus profond de la culture russe. Je pense que les structures fondamentales de la culture bretonne remontent à l'orthodoxie.»

La poésie russe en breton

Ce jour-là, André Markowicz décide de vivre en Bretagne. Il y découvre «le mépris, l'oppression subie par le Breton dans sa langue. En tant que juif qui avait perdu le yiddish, cela m'était insupportable.» Son regard sur l'appréhension de la langue bretonne aujourd'hui reste critique, malgré le renouveau culturel de ces dernières années: «En tant que traducteur, j'estime que la langue bretonne n'est pas forcément enseignée comme elle pourrait l'être, avec trop de traductions littérales d'expressions françaises.» Il s'inquiète de la disparition de l'oral: «Je sens la langue bretonne en perdition, parce qu'elle

perd tous liens avec la tradition populaire. Seuls les artistes (il cite Kemener, Éric Marchand, Roland Becker...) perpétuent cette langue populaire et sa mentalité.»

André Markowicz avoue ne pas parler breton, mais le comprendre, par les chansons. «Je pense que ma vocation n'était pas d'être traducteur, mais chanteur breton... Je chante comme une casserole, mais avec joie et obstination, en breton seulement. J'aimerais vivre à la fois à Saint-Petersbourg, à Paris, et dans un village breton. Je suis breton, je me veux breton. Mon pays, ce sont les pierres d'ici, les paysages, la musique de la langue des paysans.» Alors, avec son ami poète Koulizh Kedez, André Markowicz a entrepris une anthologie de la poésie russe en breton, avec une traduction française «mot à mot». Le premier volume vient de sortir: le Requiem d'Anna Ac'hmatova. «Douze poèmes sur la terreur du régime de Staline. Douze gwerz russes.»

Michel TROADEC.

LEARNING THE BRETON LANGUAGE ... IF YOU DON'T KNOW ANY FRENCH

A Listing Prepared by Lois Kuter for the U.S. ICDBL

One of the most frequent requests the U.S. ICDBL receives is for information about how Americans can learn Breton.

There is a wealth of learning materials for the Breton language for people in Brittany who are French speakers, or who can speak or understand Breton but never had the opportunity to learn to read or write it. BUT, for those who know no French at all, the materials available to study Breton are more limited. The best way to learn Breton is to go to Brittany and enroll in an intensive immersion class, and there are many classes for adult learners throughout Brittany (and I will try to prepare a list of some organizations to contact). Once you have some basics, perfecting your use of Breton requires some practice--simply spending some time with Breton-speakers who will welcome conversation with a beginner.

Here in the U.S. there are no (or only very rare) classes for learning Breton, and the only option open for those who want to learn Breton is to begin on your own with books. The following is intended to provide a useful listing of materials in English or the Celtic languages that can be used to begin study.

Some of the information below has been pulled from the U.S. ICDBL Guide to Breton Learning Materials as well as more recent reviews in the U.S. ICDBL newsletter, Bro Nevez. And I have added other references based on my own knowledge and listings in catalogs. To be added to this resource list are the resources available through the Internet. English speaking readers who have used Web sites to study Breton are encouraged to send a note to the Editor about your experiences.

Lois Kuter, Editor Bro Nevez
U.S. ICDBL
169 Greenwood Ave., B-4
Jenkintown, PA 19046

BASIC GRAMMARS AND TEXT BOOKS IN ENGLISH

Per Denez. Brezhoneg buan hag aes. (Omnivox, 1972). English version: Raymond Delaporte (Cork University Press, Ireland, 1977; reprinted in 1980 & 1989); Welsh version: Rita Williams (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Welsh University Press, Caerdydd, Wales).

This textbook, complete with two cassette tapes, exists in French, English and Welsh versions. There are 25 chapters, graded in difficulty, each containing an opening conversation accompanied by a vocabulary of words introduced in the dialogue. A set of questions follows each conversation that creates variations on the grammatical structures presented. Following this is an explanation, with examples drawn from the conversation, of the grammatical points covered. Each lesson closes with a set of exercises requiring the formulation of responses to questions and vice-versa, and substitution and transformation drills. A lexicon at the end of the book cross-references to the first lesson in which each entry was used.

The format of the textbook is visually pleasing, and a good bit of grammatical information is charted clearly and systematically. The cassette tapes that accompany the text conversations are of a generally high quality

acoustically, though the dialogues are characterized by rather more traditional sex-role stereotyping than suits me. On the other hand, the droll, sometimes irreverent sketches by Nono reappearing frequently throughout the book are good fun.

An exercise book entitled Komzit ha skrivit brezhoneg with two additional cassettes, complements the main text. This is very helpful to the solo learner as a means for further practice. Also accompanying the book is a booklet of examples of sentences designed for daily study by the student so that grammatical points are not lost in the absence of regular work. This book, Brezhoneg bemdez, is also accompanied by two cassette tapes. (Lenora A. Timm)

Roparz Hemon. Breton Grammar. Tenth edition, Translated, adapted and revised by Michael Everson. Dublin: Everson Gunn Teoranta, 1995. 103 pages.

Translation with some adaptations for English-speakers especially in the area of pronunciation (and here's an area that may require some adaptation by American English speakers) This is a pretty straightforward and useful introduction to the basics of Breton: mutations, the article, nouns, personal pronouns, qualifying adjectives, numbers, verbs, etc.). In the bibliography to the grammar, Everson notes that he will be translating another work by Roparz Hemon: Kentelioù brezhoneg eeun—Elementary Cours in Breton (8th edition).

Ian Press. A Grammar of Modern Breton. (New York/Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter) 1987. xii. 406 pages.

This is the first attempt at a comprehensive grammar in English of the Breton language since Hardie's long out-of-print A Handbook of Modern Breton (Armorican) (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1948). The present volume is refreshingly up to date in approach from a linguistic point of view, though the author wisely refrains from getting bogged down in debating points in modern linguistic theory, while showing that he is conversant with some of the contemporary literature in the discipline. The work falls short of being a reference grammar of the language, but that was not the author's principal aim. His aim was rather to "provide an accessible description of the literary language, sufficient to permit reading and, in conjunction with a suitable course, to permit communication with native speakers" (p. 4). The didactic and descriptive (not: not prescriptive) orientation of the grammar is evident throughout the work and it would, in my opinion, serve admirably in beginning and intermediate courses in Breton with an instructor (and preferably students) acquainted with basic principles of linguistic analysis.

The grammar consists of five chapters, each devoted to specific aspects of Breton phonology and grammar. Following an introductory chapter, Press devotes a lengthy Chapter 2 to an overview of Breton phonology. Here he synthesizes a number of descriptive studies of the Breton sound system, typically based on the characteristics of a particular subdialect, to arrive at a sort of compromise--or, perhaps, most likely--inventory of phonemes and allophones. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the complex consonant mutations, familiar to all who have dabbled in Breton or other Celtic languages. Chapter 3 on Morphology is far and away the longest chapter, covering in some detail all of the major morpheme classes of the language, with helpful examples of both regular grammatical processes and irregular formations. Chapter 4 is devoted to Breton syntax, i.e. the structure of the sentence. Here the author provides an exposition of the various sentence types--simple, complex, positive, negative--and touches on themes of relevance to more theoretical issues within linguistics, such as topicalization, clefting and word order. The final chapter, 5, provides a synopsis of the main word-forming processes in the language--i.e. the use of suffixes, prefixes and compounding of words to produce new words. The remaining 181 pages of the work are devoted to seven appendices, a bibliography, and a two-page thematic index. (Lenora A. Timm).

BRETON-ENGLISH/ENGLISH-BRETON DICTIONARIES

R. Delaporte. Elementary Breton-English Dictionary/Geriadurig BrezhonegSaozneg. (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press), 1979. 110 pages. Lesneven: Mouladuriou Hor Yezh. reedition 1990. 210 pages. 85 francs.

This is the first Breton-English dictionary published. It covers basic Breton vocabulary, as the author points out in his Forward, and is intended as a teaching aid for English speakers tackling Breton who do not have a good grasp of French. The format of the dictionary is very similar to that of Hemon's Breton-French dictionary, to the point of including an appendix of conjugations of some irregular verbs and important prepositions. The book is clearly printed and easy on the eye. (Lenora A. Timm)

Raymond Delaporte. Elementary Breton-English & English-Breton Dictionary/Geriadurig Brezhoneg-Saozneg ha Saozneg-Brezhoneg. Lesneven: Mouladuriou Hor Yezh, 1995. 541 pages.

This takes Delaporte's Elementary Breton-English Dictionary an important step further by expanding the dictionary to include approximately 9,000 entries and adding an English-Breton version as well. The edition of this expanded work is thanks to the work of Divi Kervella and Kristian Brisson who took up the work of Delaporte who died in 1990 before the dictionary could be expanded. I have found the dictionary extremely easy to use and seem to always find whatever word I seek – from Breton to English or English to Breton. The is a key tool for those beginning a study of Breton. (Lois Kuter)

Remon ar Porzh (Raymond Delaporte). Geriadur Brezhoneg-Saozneg/Breton-English Dictionary. (Lesneven: Mouladuriou Hor Yezh) Vol. 1: A-B, 1986, 215 pages; Vol. II: CH-C'H-D, 1989, 235 pages; Vol. III: E-G, 1993, 191 pages.

Those who know little or no French now have a resource to get right to Breton. We need no longer grasp through a fog of Gallicisms. The dictionary is a major piece of work. It is pleasingly meaty; single entries more often than not provide a range of meanings, context, and examples of usage, providing a cross section of Breton, basically grounded in the modern spoken language, with access to the resources developed over the centuries, and a selection of words newly-coined in this century. A simple browse through the book could teach a good bit about Brittany. The literature cited betrays, perhaps, an inclination towards the Chateauneuf-du-Faou, Pleyben area of the compiler's birth, but that is far from being a reproach. With the death of the author in December 1990, we fear for the completion of this important resource for English speakers, and hope it will be carried on. (Jay Callahan).

Mark Kerrain. Brezhoneg Diouzhtu – at once – tout de suite/ Useful Breton Phrases. Sav-Heol (42 straed al lireu, 35136 Sant Jakez al Lanneg). 1996. 10 pages.

This is a basic phrase book with the Breton phrase, English equivalent, and French equivalent (if your Breton pronunciation is really bad, you could always try the French!). Different sections give you useful words and phrases for greeting people, basic conversation, the weather, directions, food and drink, smoking, and a variety of other areas of discussion—giving orders, flirting, asking questions, offering help, and giving out an insult or two (there are many listed!).

BRETON-BRETON DICTIONARY

Geriadur Brezhoneg /Ar Releg Kerhuon: An Here, 1994.

This is the first-ever Breton-to-Breton dictionary. This 1,000-page illustrated dictionary will includes some 10,000 words—a monumental work by a group led by Jean-Yves Lagadeg since 1987. This is a very important tool for Breton-users—one where translations to French (or some other language) can finally be eliminated. (Lois Kuter).

ANOTHER RESOURCE FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Per Denez. Glas evel daoulagad c'hlas na oant ket va re. Brest: Al Liamm, 1979. Translated by J. Ian Press, Blue like blue eyes which were not my own. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh, 1993. 102 pages.

There is nothing like testing your knowledge of Breton by trying to read a book. A novel by Per Denez is the perfect test since it has been translated from the original Breton to English and both texts are available.

Youenn Gwernig. Un Domad Plu / A Handful of Feathers. Brest: Al Liamm, 1997.

While poetry might offer a bit more of a challenge, a new anthology of work by Youenn Gwernig can also be recommended. Breton texts and English versions by the poet himself are side by side in the collection.

FOR WELSH SPEAKERS

Yann Guehennec. Kembraeg evit ar Vrezhoneg. Plomelin: Preder, 1997, 160 pages.

A manual for Breton learners which takes you directly from Welsh to Breton without detouring to English.

Rita Williams Brezhoneg Buan hag Aes. Translation of Per Denez's text (see above). Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, Welsh University Press, Caerdydd, Wales.

Rita Williams. Geriadur brezhonek-kembraek. (Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh), 1985. 144 pages.

A dictionary for Welsh speakers--Breton to Welsh. NOT SEEN. (Lois Kuter)

Rhisiart Hincks. Geriadur Kembraeg-Brezhoneg (Elementary Welsh-Breton Dictionary). Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1991. Revised edition 1997. 194 pages.

Just as those wishing to learn Breton must pass through French to get there, those wishing to learn Welsh must go through English. For Breton speakers this is a very indirect route and this dictionary allows them to go directly to Welsh from Breton. For And for Welsh speakers learning Breton, this dictionary would also be a very useful tool. Rhisiart Hincks is a professor at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth. 194 pages of this elementary dictionary include some 10,500 word entries and an additional 60 pages includes pronunciation, orthography, and verb and preposition conjugations. (Lois Kuter)

FOR IRISH SPEAKERS

Loeiz Andouard and Éamon Ó Ciosáin. Geriadur iwerzhoneg-brezhoneg gant lavarennoù/Foclóir gaellge-briotáinis, le samplaí. (Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh), 1987. 240 pages.

A Breton-Irish dictionary for learners who want to take the more direct path of learning Breton through the medium of Irish.

Surfing to Brittany II

Here are more internet sites in and about Brittany... please send any links you would like to see here to Mary Turner at maryt@southwind.net. My list seems pretty North-Finistère-centric so find us some sites about South Finistère, Morbihan, Cotes-d'Armor, Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Atlantique, s'il vous plaît! Site language(s) indicated in parentheses (F = French; B = Breton; E = English).

Non-Commercial Sites:

<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/bruno.manach/>

(F) This is a site devoted to the Pays de Léon (North Finistère) with lots of cultural information and links to other Breton sites. I salute Bruno Manac'h for undertaking the maintenance of this wonderful site.

<http://www.breizh.net/>

(F,B,E) This is a brand spankin' new site by the newly-formed non-profit association Breizh.Net. The goal of this association is to promote Brittany and the Breton language on and via the internet (HOORAY!) The president and co-founder is Bernez Boulc'h, who runs the Ar Bed Keltiek store in Brest. Be sure to look at the great list of internet terminology in English, French and Breton, and download a Gwenn ha Du to use as a screen-saver or wallpaper. Also see the links for on-line Breton courses and dictionaries. Stop by often as there will be many additions to this site.

<http://webbo.enst-bretagne.fr/Kervarker/>

This is the Kervarker page, the absolutely best place to learn Breton and find Breton courses, on- and off-line. Lots of good links too.

<http://www.espace-sciences.org/>

(F) This is a new site devoted to making the scientific, technical and industrial research and development going on in Brittany accessible to the public.

<http://www.bagadoo.tm.fr/>

(F,E) Bagadoo, the internet service for Kemper and Cornouaille. Lots of good stuff here.

<http://www.brittany-net.com/>

(F,B,E) The Brittany Network.

<http://celtic.stanford.edu/Regions/Brittany/Breton.htm>

(E) This is the on-line version of the Guide to Music in Brittany written by our own Lois Kuter.

<http://www.utbm.fr/les.personnes/thierry.vignaud/degemer.html>

(F,B,E plus Welsh, Gaelic and German!) The homepage of Thierry Vignaud, devoted to Celtic Languages.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uczxpas/pilot_issue/bretonla.html

(E) An essay on the fate of the Breton language in Morbihan, by Paul Vanni.

<http://www.pornic.com/>

(F,E,B) The homepage of the town of Pornic, on the coast west of Nantes (just south of St. Nazaire). Complete information about the town including places to stay, restaurants, events and the newspaper. Some items are in Breton.

Surfing to Brittany - continued

http://www.univ-brest.fr/S_Commune/CRI/Jean-Michel.Roignant/1stphoto.htm#FOLKLORE

(F) Homepage of Jean-Michel Roignant, a photographer from Plougastel-Daoulas.

<http://www.isdnseattle.net/rayprice/>

(E) And of course, the homepage of Spiral Dance by Ray Price, our favorite celtic dance teacher and music lover.

Also be sure to visit the Internet Newsgroup devoted to all things Breton, "soc.culture.breton".

Commercial Sites:

<http://www.arbedkeltiek.com/>

(F,B,E) The homepage of that wonderful store Ar Bed Keltiek (The Celtic World) which has locations in Brest and Kemper. You can order books, music and celtic art (among other things) via email, and soon via on-line secured order form with your credit card (aaahhhh, plastic!) They keep a list of the latest additions to their book inventory on-line (books in French and Breton, and some English), and have a book of the month featured for each language. Don't miss their great list of links.

<http://www.sortir-brest.com/>

(F) The homepage of Sortir Brest. This is the on-line version of a free monthly publication distributed in Brest, containing info about the music, art and sports happenings in and around Brest. Although aimed mostly at the college-age crowd, it nearly always contains info about traditional Breton cultural happenings as well to encourage the younger generation to become involved in their heritage.

<http://www.bretagne-export.com/>

(F,E) Crazy for some crêpes? Mad for some madeleines? Sighing for some cider? (sorry) If you just gotta have some Breton food NOW, and don't have someone in Brittany to send you a care package, this is the place for you! I have ordered from them, and I received my package in a week, everything fresh and unbroken, and was in piggy heaven for a while. The prices are quite reasonable, but the shipping is a killer, as expected. But if you are absolutely keen for kouign-amann.....

(NOTE: This is the only business of this type that I know about with a web page; I will try to find others, on- or offline, and let you know in future issues...)

<http://www.pontavensa.org/>

(F,E) The Pont-Aven School of Art.

<http://www.ciel.cci-brest.fr/>

(F,E) Study French in Brittany!

<http://www.cci-brest.fr/>

(F) The homepage of the Brest Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

NEW RECORDINGS FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Dider Squiban. Molène. L'OZ Production L'OZ 17. 1997. CD 64'24

By now readers of Bro Nevez should be familiar with the name Didier Squiban, who has worked with singer Yann-Fañch Kemener and a number of other top artists of Brittany (see reviews of Ile-Exil and Live: La Musique du Bout du Monde in Bro Nevez 62, May 1997; of Penn ar Bed—Brest 96 in No. 58, May 1996; and Enez Eusa in No. 54, May 1995).

Didier Squiban is a pianist—conservatory trained and practiced in jazz—whose sources of inspiration range from Bach and Poulenc to Alan Stivell and the traditional ballads of Brittany. Maritime Brittany is very much present in most of the other works by Squiban, and is the basis for this suite of three compositions: Tri Men (the three stones, which Squiban identifies for him to be “the piano, Brittany, and the sea”), Ker Eon (The house of foam), and Bannec. While it is one thing for a guitarist or singer to spend time on a rocky coast of Brittany to seek inspiration, it is quite another to haul a grand piano to a tiny island. But that is just what Didier Squiban did in taking his piano to the tiny island of Molène off the far northwestern tip of Brittany, adjacent to the Island of Ouessant, to compose and record this CD.

Improvising on Breton dance tunes and songs as well as creating new compositions, Squiban succeeds in producing music that is fresh and interesting. On previous recordings as well as this one, he takes full advantage of his chosen instrument—the piano—to give a new sound to traditional melodies and rhythms of Brittany. The freeness to his performance style and the improvisational nature of his work is well suited to both the slower melodies and dance tunes of Brittany. His sources for new composition and arrangements are quite varied: from ballads in the Barzaz Breiz collection (An Alarc'h), traditional marches and dances (gavotte, laridé, kost ar c'hoat, and an dro), contemporary Breton poets and composers (Angèle Vannier, Jef Le Penven), traditional ballads and new songs and melodies performed by Breton musicians of today (Yann Fañch Kemener, Gildas Beauvoir, Kristen Nogues, Gilles le Bigot) and inspired directly by the sea and maritime culture.

The notes accompanying the CD are exceptional—31 pages taken up primarily by magnificent photographs of Molène and its people, boats and sites by Michel Thersiquel. Dider Squiban introduces himself and the CD in the first two pages of the notes. The various pieces which make up each suite are described briefly by Squiban himself—citing the source of inspiration or a specific song or tune being arranged. I always find such information interesting, and the photos definitely set a tone, and allow those who have never been to Brittany or to its islands to get a sense of colors and moods.

This is a beautifully produced CD that does full justice to the high quality of music composed and performed by Didier Squiban. And Didier Squiban certainly does full justice to the musical and maritime heritage of Brittany in these compositions for piano.

* * *

Jef Le Penven. Symphonie Mor-Bihan, Cantate du Bout du Monde (Kanadenn Penn ar Bed). Choeur du Breizh a Gan, Orchestre de Brocéliande. Kendalc'h/Escalibur CD 876. 1997.

Born in Pontivy in 1919 of a family of wood-workers, Jef Le Penven's first instrument was a bombarde which he fabricated himself when he was ten. His family gave him piano lessons and he moved on to the organ and had a life-long love for Bach. But his classical training did not prevent him from becoming very familiar with traditional music of Brittany. From 1933 to 1937 Le Penven studied at the Schola Cantorum in Paris under Marcel Dupré. Medically disqualified to serve in the army, Jef Le Penven worked during the early 1940s with the Orchestra of Rennes where he began to compose and to meet artists, poets and musicians of Brittany who would go on to develop a renaissance of Breton arts through Bodadeg ar Sonerien and Celtic Circles.

Although Brittany was cheated of a brilliant composer with the death of Jef Le Penven in 1967 at the age of just 48, he left behind a large number of works. Perhaps the best known among his many compositions for voice and piano, organ, symphony orchestras, chamber ensembles and choirs, is "Me zo gannet e kreiz er mor" which is composed on the poetry of Jean-Pierre Calloc'h. This has been interpreted by a number of Breton musicians including Didier Squiban (noted above) and Alan Stivell.

This CD features two of Le Penven's major works. The Symphonie Mor-Bihan was commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Morbihan for a Exhibition of Breton industry and economy in 1963 in Lorient. Included in this classical symphony is the pairing of bombarde and bagpipes so well loved and known by Le Penven. The second work on the CD is the Cantate du Bout du Monde which was created in 1957 and which incorporates texts by the famous Breton writer/poet Per Jakez Helias. This cantata for orchestra and choir evokes the early history of the Celts and their movement through Europe and settlement in Brittany. This richly textured work includes orchestra and choir with solos for soprano, tenor and baritone voices, as well as the paired bombarde and bagpipes. A short recitation (in French) introduces each section of the work. When first performed at the Festival de Cornouaille in Quimper in 1958 the bagad of the Kevrenn de Rennes—then champion of Brittany—was part of the performance.

With the advance in technology and the growth of excellent orchestras and choirs in Brittany, the live recording in 1997 of these important works by one of Brittany's most

brilliant composers is very welcome. The Orchestra (and Choir) of Brocéliande was formed in 1990 and is based in Montfort (Ille-et-Vilaine). This is a professional ensemble directed by Jacques Wojciechowski which has made its mission the performance and promotion of Breton composers. The chorale work in the Cantata du Bout du Monde is by the combined choirs of Breizh a Gan (choirs from Arradon, Brocéliande, Carantec, Nantes, Plomelin, Ploeumeur-Bodou, Lorient, Rennes and Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau) who focus on a Breton-language repertoire.

The notes to the CD include a short biography of Jef Le Penven, and I have pulled more information from a very complete account of this composer and his work found in Vefa de Bellaing's Dictionnaire des compositeurs de musique en Bretagne (Ouest Editions, 1992, 280 pages). This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in the unique contributions Breton composers have made to the more classical tradition of music. The CD notes also present Kendalc'h, a federation of cultural groups which sponsored the production of the CD and which has fostered Breton music and culture since 1950. Also presented briefly is the Orchestre de Brocéliande. And there are also good notes to describe the history and thematic content of the two works featured.

Thanks to such new recordings, composers of Brittany who worked in what we call a classical style of music are now becoming better known. With his extensive knowledge of and roots in Breton traditions, Jef Le Penven deserves to be heard more widely, and this CD is a very welcome introduction to his genius, performed with professionalism and passion by musicians and singers of Brittany.

* * *

Gwenola Roparz. Baradoz (Cantiques et musiques populaires de Bretagne pour voix, harpe et orgue). Escalibur CD 877. 1997. CD 47'40.

This second recording by harpist Gwenola Roparz is very different from her first which was solo and featured traditional dances of Brittany (see review in Bro Nevez 53, February 1995). In this CD you hear her talent on Celtic harp, but this is secondary to her role in the creation of this CD and its arrangement of Breton cantiques for harp, organ and choral work. The focus of the CD is the cantique—traditional hymns of Brittany which often pull their beautiful melodies from Brittany's more secular heritage. And the beauty of these melodies is well presented in the arrangements combining harp and/or organ with female voices.

Organ is provided by Maria Guozzi and Hervé Lesvenan who both have a solid training in classical as well as more modern composition. I found the organ a bit "heavy" at times (and I admit that I am no big fan of the massive sound of church organs), but the use of organ is quite varied and interesting. The power of the organ at times seemed in conflict with the lightness of the harp and the uncomplicated singing (no operatic

voices here). Solo voice is provided by Véronique Bourjot (who sings at festoù noz and with an Irish group). Five other women also participate on the CD: Fabienne Monestier, Anne-Marie Le Tallec, Isabelle Quidu, Magalie Cottin and Dominique Morvan.

The selections on the CD are presented in three suites with two cantiques from the Leon region of Brittany, two from Treger, and three from Gwened. Closing the CD is the Kantik ar Baradoz (Cantique of Paradise) which is one of the best known cantiques of Brittany.

Jacket notes nicely present the idea behind the CD, the musicians, and a brief introduction to cantiques. The Breton words to each cantique are included.

From a Breton speaking and musical family of central Brittany, Gwenola Roparz has been well exposed to traditional music and dance of Brittany. Conservatory trained, she has a wider musical perspective and has looked at the world's musical traditions through ethnomusicology studies. And, to me, most telling of all in her ability to produce such an innovative CD, is the fact that she has studied composition with Breton composer Pierre-Yves Moign. Few musicians have the traditional roots combined with the tools of a more formal study and the influence of a highly innovative composers like Pierre-Yves Moign to apply to the arrangement of cantiques where voices, harp and organ are balanced in new ways.

Bravo to Gwenola Roparz for the research and work involved in preparing this CD and for taking a few risks in presenting cantiques of Brittany in a new way.

* * *

BF.15. Primeur. Escalibur CD 879. 1997. CD 49'01.

While here in the U.S. one might guess that the name BF.15 referred to some kind of aircraft, in fact this name is derived from a potato (a combination of the creator's name, Jean Bidan of the town of Ploeuc sur Lié, and the hybridization number). That explains why the CD comes packaged in its own little burlap bag—just like a sack of potatoes.

The originality of the packaging is matched by the originality of this band's music. While the make-up of BF.15 has changed some during its 15 years, it has maintained a distinctive sound and style which makes its music immediately identifiable. Wind instruments dominate in the arrangement of traditional Breton dances—most of which are newly composed tunes by the band or other younger Breton musicians. Michel Aumont is the composer for many of the tunes, and plays clarinet and bass clarinet in B.F. 15. He is one of the original members along with Yvon Rouget who provides fiddle. Newer to the group are Stéphane Morvan on binioù and bombarde, and Philippe Ollivier

on various accordions. While the sound of this band is “traditional” and its music is ultimately danceable, there are some jazzy moments and a feeling of innovation to the arrangements (provided especially by the clarinet).

This CD is the first BF.15 has produced in its 15 years of music-making, although it is found along with other bands (Skolvan, Carre Manchot, Strakal, Strobinnell, Storvan and Pennou Skoulm) on a wonderful recording made in 1987 called Dañs (Iguane Production/Adipho Distribution). Like the music of BF.15, the CD features dance: *Ridée* in 6, *Suite de Loudéac*, *Rond de St. Vincent*, *Gavottes Montagne*, *Hanter Dro*, *Suite Fisel*, and *An Dro*.

The notes to the CD list all the tunes and note their origins, but gives almost no information about the band and its members. However, a nice portrait of BF.15 can be found in the January/February 1998 issue of Musique Bretonne (no. 147). That article also notes that a 15th anniversary “party” will take place for BF.15 in Ploëuc sur Lié on April 3 and 4—another mini-festival which is sure to include the best of Breton music for concerts and dancing.

If you enjoy the music of Brittany’s many groups who creatively rearrange tunes for traditional Breton dances, this is a CD you will want to find. Like many of the groups that were formed in the 1980s and are still going strong, BF.15 has the strength of experienced musicians who are firmly rooted in Breton traditions, and ready to take Breton music into the 21st century.

* * *

40e Championnat de Bretagne des sonneurs par couple - Gourin. Arfolk CD 444. 1997.

In September each year since 1957 the town of Gourin has hosted a yearly contest of “sonneurs de couple” to determine the champions of Brittany. The gathering was a bit special in 1997 since this marked the 40th anniversary of this large and prestigious gathering of champions. There are lots of concerts and there is ample opportunity to dance throughout the two days of this contest/festival, but the focus is on the contests for dances, marches and melodies performed by the pairs of bombarde and the high pitched biniou koz. But contests also include the binou braz—the Scottish style bagpipes often referred to as “cornemuse” that Bretons adopted in the 20th century and play exactly like the biniou kozh in pair with the bombarde (as well as in the bagad).

This recording was produced as part of the 40th anniversary celebration, and although the title implies that it would include 1997 performances, it was released before the September competitions in Gourin. I could not seem to find any statement as to when the recordings were made, but they seem to be from the 1996 contest, including the

18 “couples” placing in the top three places of each category: melody, dance and march for both the bombarde/biniou kozh and bombarde biniau bras.

This is clearly a souvenir for those who follow this contest and the yearly contests. The live recordings lack some technical quality I’ve come to expect from new recordings, but what they lose in recording excellence they gain in the excitement of a live performance. The notes to the CD include observations by Donatien Laurent from the first contest in 1957 as well as a group photo of some of the champions since 1957 (including Alan Cochevelou Stivell and Youenn Sicard who won the contest for biniau braz/bombarde in 1966, 1968, and 1969). I also liked the photos of some of the winning pairs from 1996 which also listed past championship titles. I was disappointed that there were no notes at all for the particular selections. They were simply listed on the back of the CD case as “Marche bras Bothua-Guingo,” “Mélodie kozh Moal-Chaplain,” or “Danse bras Hénaff-Riou”. Perhaps this was due to the need to economize on the otherwise good notes provided.

For those that love the pairing of biniau kozh and bombarde and who want to hear more of the less-recorded pairing of biniau bras and bombarde, this is a great sampling of champion players and performances. To find out more about the history of the Gourin contests, including a listing of past winners, there is a very good web site available (<http://www.odyssee.net/~jfcois/coz-bras.htm>). And this will be a good place to look for news about the contest for the year 2000 which may move from Gourin to either Montreal or New York.

* * *

Bagad Kerlenn Pondi. Fest a gren. Arfolk CD 446. 1997. CD 50’.

This is the first recording of the Kerlenn Pondi that I know of, and it is just the high quality one would expect of a bagad in the top ranking category of Brittany (3rd in the championship of bagadoù in 1996). This CD presents what the bagadoù of Brittany do best—compose/arrange and perform long suites of tunes from the traditional repertoire of a particular region to be performed in competition with other bagadoù for the championship of Brittany. This requires the members of the bagad to research traditions of their own and other areas of Brittany, and then use their knowledge of the tradition to create a performance for the unique sound of the bagad—a combination of bombardes, Scottish style bagpipes, and percussion.

On this CD the Kerlenn Pondi perform a suite of melodies and dances from the Redon area (Pays de Vilaine), from the Pays Fisel, and from their own Pays Vannetais (nearly half of the CD). And while the unique sound of the bagad is featured very nicely on this CD, the Kerlenn Pondi, like many other bagadoù, also incorporates the traditional pairing of bombarde and biniau kozh, and other “guest” musicians in its performances.

In this case, you hear members of the ensemble called Div Ha Daou featured in the Vannetais suite: Aurore Breger on Celtic harp, Isabelle Quidu with vocals, organ by Jorj Belz, and bombarde of Dominig Mahé (who also sings for a melody in the Fisel suite).

The notes to the CD give a nice presentation and chronology of the Kerlenn Pondi's progress from its creation in 1953 to its rise through the ranks of the bagadoù to join the top category. Six photos show the band in concert and with the dance group with which it works closely in performance. There is also a small photo of the group Div Ha Daou. The notes also include a good description of each part of the dance suites on the CD, noting origins for the dances and song melodies. What is perhaps most impressive about the notes is that they are *fully* bilingual with Breton and French side by side—and not just a token amount of Breton to accompany the French.

This new and first recording by one of the top bagadoù of Brittany is a very welcome addition to my collection, and anyone who likes the unique and very powerful music of the bagad will enjoy this great recording by the Kerlenn Pondi.

* * *

Jean-Paul Albert. Océanides. ALB 9604 (Distr. Diffusion Breizh). 1996. CD 50'55.

In preparing to write a review for this recording by guitarist Jean-Paul Albert, I found that I just wasn't able to say anything about this musician beyond the fact that I really enjoyed listening to the music on the CD—highly melodic compositions by Albert interpreted solo on guitar or with other strings and accordion. That's all very well and good to tell you, but a review should give a little more information about an artist that may be new to American listeners but well known to European audiences. So I wrote to Jean-Paul Albert for more information since he has chosen to send Bro Nevez a copy for review. In getting an immediate response (including a hand-written note and press releases), my first reaction was that Albert must not only be a very hard worker (he produces and promotes his own CDs), but a really nice guy to take such trouble to respond to me personally.

Jean-Paul Albert explains in his note to me that he is not Breton, but Angevin (from Anjou), living 120 kilometers from the Breton city of Rennes. He spent a good part of his childhood in Brittany (until he was 12) so he is certainly no foreigner to Breton culture. He has performed as a street musician, at festivals (Saint Chartier and others in western France), and in concert with well known and unknown artists. Océanides is his fourth recording, following Le Tango des HLM (1984 lp), Nuit Bleue (ALB 9202, 1992), and Histoires des Rues (ALB 9503, 1995). Jean-Paul Albert describes Océanides as having been composed partly on Brittany's Isle of Sein in February 1996.

While the notes to the CD lacked the background information I wanted for the review, they are artistically interesting and give the composition titles and basic credits for accompanying musicians. Some of the success of this CD can certainly be credited to the high quality of accompaniment and collaboration from other musicians. Jarek Frankowski is listed as composer for the title track "Océanides" as well as sound man for the recording which was done in the Acoustic Recordings studio in Brussels. Two of the musicians for the CD were (are?) also part of the wonderful Breton/Belgium group called Orion which arranges Irish music: Rudy Velge on nykelharpa and Racquel Gigot on accordion. Also working with Albert are Ariane Plumerel on fiddle and Liam Fenneley on viola da gamba. While the guitar of Jean-Paul Albert is definitely center-stage in these compositions, the accompaniment of these instruments on five of the thirteen selections adds a nice new texture.

Jean-Paul Albert's compositions for Océanides and his previous recordings are "impressions of places and their stories, their images, and of the people befriended." That indeed describes excellently the feeling you come away with in listening to Océanides. It is a highly personal rendering of places and experiences in sound—sound that a listener can enjoy and reinterpret based on his or her own experiences. The music invites you to sit back and imagine, reflect on your own voyages, and dream.

* * *

Voix Celtiques/Celtic Voices. Keltia Musique KMCD77. 1997.

It seems that everyone is trying to cash in on the "Celtic" music craze these days ... including the Breton producer Keltia Musique. While most CDs with the title "Celtic something" include only Irish and Scottish artists (and rarely the Celtic languages), this new compilation does at least feature song in the Celtic languages and includes Breton musicians. While it may be more difficult to find Cornish or Manx performers for such samplers, it astounds me that the Welsh are excluded. Shame on Keltia Musique for not making the effort to include one or two Welsh artists. If recording companies are going to make sales by using "Celtic-something" titles, they should at least include an explanation in the notes somewhere that the Celts are found in Wales, Cornwall and the Isle of Man, as well as Brittany, Scotland and Ireland.

With the scolding out of the way, let me say that this is definitely a collection of great Celtic voices, leading off with Annie Ebrel with a gwerz called "Ar Galon Digorr" accompanied beautifully by Davy Spillaine and Gilles Le Bigot. This is one of the rare examples I have heard where Bretons and Irish collaborate so closely, and Annie Ebrel travelled to Spillaine's studio in Ireland to record this. The other Breton language voice to be heard on the CD is that of Yann-Fañch Kemener from his collaboration with the group Skolvan (from their CD Swing and Tears). Further representing Brittany with a song in English is Dan ar Braz ("She's gone." From Songs). Canada's Loreena McKennitt

performs "Snow" from her CD To Drive the Cold Winter Away. To represent Scotland are the group The Iron Horse ("Raindance," from Voice of the Land), Tannas ("The Old Hags Set," from Rú-Ra), Capercaillie ("Ailein Duinn," from Dark Alan), and singer Karen Matheson ("Rithill Aill." From The Dreaming Sea). As is the case for Scotland, the Irish singers are Gaelic speakers, although Talitha MacKenzie performs a traditional Serbian melody with a text she composed in what sounds like Serbian to me ("Ajde Jano" from her CD Spiorad). More traditional in style, and one of the selections I liked the best, was Seamus Begley singing "Beir mo Dhúthracht" with a subtle accompaniment on guitar by Stephen Cooney (from CD Meitheal). Also representing Ireland are John Spillaine ("Seachtain" from his CD The Wells of the World - shouldn't that be "Wheels of the world"?), Altan ("Sí Do Mhaimeo Í" from Harvest Storm), Nóirín ní Riain ("Port na bPúcai," from Celtic Soul), Anúna ("The Green Laurel" from Deep Dead Blue), and Kíla ("Sean Deora" from Mind the Gap).

While the CD notes present each selection (in French and English), some of the notes are a bit weak in content—more praise of the artist than any real biographical information about them. Part of the text for Annie Ebrel's song "Ar Galon Digorr" (shouldn't that be "Digor"?), is included with a brief synopsis in French and English, but no other text or notes on the songs' contents are to be found. That is too bad, since there is room in most cases in the notes to add more information without jeopardizing the appearance or adding more pages.

Both for the prominence of Celtic languages (Breton, Irish and Scottish Gaelic), this CD stands out as one of the few collections of "Celtic Voices" that is truly "Celtic"—despite its exclusion of the Welsh, Cornish and Manx. The artists are all high quality and the selections are all from recordings made in the 1990s—great performances of new arrangements rooted in the traditional musical heritage of each country.

* * *

Celtic Music—Live from Mountain Stage. Blue Plate Music (Nashville, Tennessee). BPM-311. 1997.

As stated on the CD notes, Mountain Stage is a weekly, two-hour performance radio program which is broadcast nationally in the U.S. Live performances bridge a number of styles (blues, rock, folk) with musicians primarily from the U.S. but also from the rest of the world. This CD called "Celtic Music—Live from Mountain Stage" includes some of the "Celtic" bands and singers who have appeared on this radio program. Larry Groce, the Host and Artistic Director of Mountain Stage, includes a brief introduction to the CD in which he honestly expresses the various meanings the word "Celtic" has for him (and most others in the U.S., I would suspect). It is worth including this introduction because it helps understand how muddled the notion of "Celtic" is for most people:

Over the years Mountain Stage has featured hundreds of artists from outside the USA. Many of these have been performers who had a little or a lot of what is called Celtic influence. I'm neither a historian nor a musicologist, but I know that the Celts were a group of people originally from the mountains of central and eastern Europe before the birth of Christ who moved westward over the centuries through France into Britain and Ireland. They were known as wild, fierce fighters whose artisans fashioned designs that still show up on jewelry today. They also left a legacy of mysticism and dark romance that influenced traditional Appalachian music in America and helped create that "high and lonesome sound" in bluegrass.

As with most musical labels, "Celtic" means different things to different people. I have no idea what relation today's "Celtic" music has to the sounds made by those people who spoke a language that predates contemporary Gaelic tongues, but we have chosen cuts that represent a mix of what is known as Celtic today.

Ireland's Altan and the Isle of Man's Emma Christian perform very traditionally in the native languages of their countries. Some, like Scotland's Battlefield Band and Ireland's Four Men and a Dog, mix contemporary and traditional sounds. Others like the Irish American group Black 47 have a very contemporary sound with Celtic influences.

This album reflects some of the wild energy, mystical vision and good humor of those people who swept across Europe hundreds of years ago.

(Anyone who might want to make a few comments on that little presentation of the Celts can contact Mountain Stage via their e-mail address: stage@wvlc.wvnet.edu).

Although I am annoyed by the way "Celtic music" is presented on so many new "Celtic-something" CDs produced primarily in the U.S., I cannot deny that this is a nice sample of great performances. And this has the uniqueness of being a sampler of live performances rather than cuts pulled from earlier CD recordings. Besides Emma Christian, Altan, Battlefield Band, Four Men and a Dog, and Black 47, mentioned above, the CD includes The Tannahill Weavers, Luka Bloom, Eleanor McEvoy, Andy Irvine, Dougie MacLean, and the Oyster Band. A photo and paragraph describing each group/artist is included in the notes—most are quite informative.

* * *

Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra. The Celtic Album. RCA Victor. 09026-68901-2. 1998. CD 60'21.

And while we're on the subject of cashing in on the word "Celtic" ... here's a new CD that certainly fits this category. And in this case, the CD seems geared especially to cashing in on the immense popularity of the dance production "Riverdance" and movies such as "Rob Roy" and "Braveheart." Indeed photos of the young and handsome Boston Pops Orchestra conductor Keith Lockhart featured on the CD cover and back as well as on two full page photos in the notes show him in kilt and tartan with leather boots and arm bands that make him look like he just stepped off the set of the movie "Braveheart." The full-page biography that came with the CD from the distributor Intercultural Niche Strategies explains that Maestro Lockhart was born in Poughkeepsie, New York, in November 1959, and he seems to have followed the conservatory music training one would want in an orchestra conductor. Nothing is mentioned of any Scottish roots although the tartan he wears for the CD is described as being "from the Ayrshire District which contains the Lockhart family clan."

The selections on the CD are not just the latest pop hits, however, including more classical compositions as well: "The Hebrides" by Felix Mendelssohn and "Four Scottish Dances" by Malcolm Arnold. Written specifically for performance by a symphony orchestra these are the selections that seem to work best for the Boston Pops, as do the arrangements of two Turlough O'Carolan tunes "Planxty Burke" and "Loftus Jones." The performance of the Boston Pops seems a bit more awkward and intrusive in some of the more traditional dances and tunes. Leading off the CD is the Boston Pipers Society with "Scotland the Brave." While the combination of pipe bands with military brass bands has been successful, I can't say the same for the back-up here by an orchestra, but "Scotland the Brave" is sure to please American listeners—along with "Auld Lang Syne," it is a stereotype for Scottish music for most people. Besides the one appearance by the pipe band, guest artists on the CD include Jerry O'Sullivan on uilleann pipes, Eileen Iverson on fiddle, and the musicians of Cherish the Ladies, featuring especially Joanie Madden on flute and whistle on several selections.

Notes to the CD include a good introduction to each selection as well as information about the Boston Pops Orchestra and Keith Lockhart, and a brief biographical introduction to Cherish the Ladies and Eileen Ivers. Jerry O'Sullivan seems to have been forgotten in this section of the notes which also lists members of the Boston Pops and Boston Pipers Society (although he is cited in the notes to selections in which he plays). Also in the notes is a long introduction to the CD by Earle Hitchner ("an award-winning journalist who writes on Celtic music for The Wall Street Journal, Irish Echo, and many other publications"). This gives a good idea of how the Boston Pops went about putting the CD together. He cites the strength of an oral tradition passed down from one generation of Celts to the next, and praises Celtic music for its resilience and its appeal to all people (Celtic or not). Also cited is the large number of people in the U.S. (more

than 44 million) claiming Irish ancestry, and the millions of others who “trace their lineage back to Scotland and other Celtic lands.” It is where Hitchner tries to give a bit of history about the Celts that he gets into some trouble:

But who were the Celts, fountainhead of all this marvelous music heard today? The term itself comes from keltoi, a word used by the Greeks to describe a mass of tribes populating central and southwestern Europe during the Iron Age. Proud and passionate, the Celts shared a fierce independent streak.

The influx of Celts to Ireland, Scotland, Wales and other parts of Britain might have begun as early as 400 B.C., and they brought their rich culture with them. That culture—art, language, music—is at the heart of what we now call Celtic.

While Hitchner does note that language is at the heart of what is Celtic today, would it kill him or other people who write such CD notes to merely mention that Celtic language speakers are alive and well today in Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man, *as well as* Scotland and Ireland? While I don’t expect the “Celtic-something” CDs hitting the market to include selections from all of the Celtic countries, nor an exhaustive history of the Celts in their notes, it is sad to see that such recordings with such a wide distribution nearly always fail to even mention the existence of the Celtic languages and the rich musical traditions of Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man.

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Just A Short Note ... For Now

From Mary Turner

Denez Prigent. “Me ‘Zalc’h Ennon ur Fulenn Aour” Rosebud/Barclay 539254-2. 1997.

This new CD by Denez Prigent, one of Brittany most popular younger traditional singers, combines his mastery of traditional gwerz and kan ha diskan with an overlay of techno, hip-hop and industrial sound that works well, is tasteful, mostly unobtrusive, and fits the mood of each song. Most of the songs are about sad themes, but the lyrics and music put across the positive theme from the title “I guard in myself a spark of gold (hope for the future)”. I personally love this CD. Denez Prigent’s first CD Ar gouriz koar/La ceinture de cire has just been re-recorded (Barclay 533812-2). I will be writing a longer review for the May issue of Bro Nevez to introduce both these new CDs.

Third Festival of Traditional Song

Bovel - April 17-19, 1998

This unusual festival which features traditional unaccompanied song of eastern and western Brittany in both the French and Breton language is held in Bovel—a small village approximately 30 kilometers to the southwest of Rennes (and you won't find it in any guidebook). The most unusual event of the three day festival leads it off on Friday--the "joute chantée"-- a singing competition where two teams of singers are given an assignment on the spot (drawn from a hat. This defines the subject of the song and it's nature (religious, humorous, tragic, etc.), the make-up of the performance (mixed, both groups together or alternating their presentation), and particular constraints (time for preparing the performance, a specific staging, etc). The teams are made up of singers who have the talent to juggle the unknown and do some composing/arranging on the spot. After each contest the audience votes for their favorite team by lifting a red or blue box in the air. This contest brings out fully the wonderful spontaneity of Breton tradition song and its performance.

On Saturday afternoon Brittany's unique tradition of singing for dancing is featured in a workshop drawing on the experience of the older populations from retirement homes in local towns to teach the dancing. (ridée, tour, pilé-menu, rond de Saint Vincent-sur-Oust). These are truly wonderful circle dances of the Gallo tradition which get overshadowed by the better known gavotte and plinn of western Brittany. The evening begins with a concert by two remarkable women singers: Annie Ebrel from Brittany, and Mah Damba from Mali (Africa). The fest noz following the concert includes the gavotte (Ebrel/Lallour) and the plinn (Le Corre/Coatrieux), but lots of great dances from the lesser known (to the outside world) traditions of central and eastern Brittany, including the Pays de Fougères, Pays de Mené, Pays nantais, Pays paludier (the deep south), Pays de Loudéac, and Breton language and Gallo Vannetais traditions.

Sunday begins with a "Radonnée chantée" (a walk through the countryside where singers and musicians provide some music). At 12:30 you can attend an "Apéro chant"—pre-dinner drinks where song is also provided and the new cassette "En passant par Bovel" is launched. At 1:30 you move on to a "repas chanté" – lunch (more like a dinner) during which singers stand up and sing their best songs. There is no program of who sings when (or who sings at all) but it can be guaranteed that singers will not be timid about showing off their repertoire. At 4 p.m. the schedule shows a contest of "Bahoteries..." I have no idea what that is but it wouldn't be included if it weren't worth hearing. A concert at 4:30 features young people of Saint Vincent-sur-Oust who act out and perform song in a performance called "100 years of weddings in Saint Vincent-sur-Oust" This is followed by a fest-deiz open to all singers and musicians who care to provide the music (and this will include great and up-and-coming singers, no doubt).

This is not a huge festival like the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient or the Fêtes de Cornouaille, nor will you see any tourists in Bovel, but this is definitely one of the great festivals of Brittany where Bretons of all generations get together to celebrate their wonderful song traditions.

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