

BRO NEVEZ

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



Ar Redadeg
Running for Diwan

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Lois Kuter

May has been a busy month in Brittany. As you will read in the opening pages of this issue of Bro Nevez, Deputies and Senators of France have been discussing the importance of regional languages for their country. And the existence of regional languages may become recognized in the French Constitution. Considering the resistance to any official recognition of languages other than French in France, this discussion is significant. However, resistance remains and it is unclear if Constitutional mention of regional languages will pave a way for more resources or recourse in insuring their future. As Bretons themselves note, the future for the Breton language rests in the hands of Bretons themselves who must continue to work to advance its place in education, the

media, public services, and every other part of everyday life.



You will also read in this issue of Bro Nevez about "Ar Redadeg" – a culminating event in the year long celebration of Diwan's 30th anniversary. While finances are always a concern for Diwan as it continues to plan for growth, the success of this immersion Breton language school system cannot be denied. Along side of bilingual programs in the public and Catholic schools, it is critical that Diwan continues to expand. One can hope that the verbal support for regional languages expressed widely in France's National Assembly and Senate will translate into some real support for the future of education in these languages.

France's Regional Languages To Be Recognized in the French Constitution *Lots of Talk, and Some Action!!!*

Presented by Lois Kuter

In the French National Assembly, May 7

On May 7th for the first time in a long time (some reports calling it the "first") the French government fostered a debate in the French National Assembly on "regional" languages. While its placement late in the afternoon on the day before a national holiday guaranteed a sparse attendance, two dozen Parliament members took the opportunity to express their desire for action to protect and promote the regional languages of France. This very interesting discussion ("Déclaration du gouvernement sur les langues régionales et débat sur cette déclaration") can be found on the site:

www.assemblee-nationale.fr .

During a little over three hours of discussion Representatives from various regions of France all noted gratitude for the long-overdue opportunity to discuss the issue of regional languages. There was strong consensus that the plurality of languages in France was a wealth for the country and that France needed to do more to protect and promote these languages. The majority of speakers urged for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by France and a rewording of Article 2 of the French Constitution to allow for this. Added to "French is the language of the Republic" should be wording such as "in respecting the regional languages which are part of our patrimony." Most speakers also noted that the promotion of regional languages in no way threatened the French language or France's national unity.

Here are some of the thoughts expressed during this session. Pierre Méhaignerie (President of the Commission on Cultural, Familial and Social Affairs) noted that loving the language of one's region and working to transmit it is not a betrayal of France but an enrichment of the country. André Schneider (from Alsace) asked "What would Alsace be without Alsatian, Brittany without Breton, Corsica without Corsican? France would become dull and sad, our beautiful diversity a somber uniformity, our cultural patchwork a flavorless fast food." Victorin Lurel noted that giving a constitutional statute to regional languages would not attack the equality of French citizens, national unity, or the indivisibility of the Republic. He, as did a number of others, noted that France loses international credibility when it proclaims the need to protect cultural diversity and does not do so within its own borders.

Daniel Mach noted that a feeling of regional belonging and pride does not mean one proposes separatism or refuses French national identity, but simply that one demands the right to take pride in and promote one's regional culture. His closing efforts to express himself in Catalan were quickly chastised by the President of the Assembly who reminded all that only French was allowed in the halls of the National Assembly. François de Rugy (Breton and Lorain) noted that regional languages contribute to people's sense of self and history that make them more open to the world – better able to fight uniformity that is threatened by globalization.

Jean-Luc Warsmann felt that the government needed to take action in supporting regional languages, but a modification of the Constitution was not advisable or necessary. Marylise Lebranchu (from Brittany) noted that this modification was critical and cited the case of laws put forth to make Diwan Breton immersion schools part of the public education system which were then thwarted by the Constitutional Council who cited Article 2 of the Constitution. She warned: "It would be frustrating and humiliating for each new regional language law to be condemned from the start. It's necessary to be careful, because humiliation leads to violence." French can be a "common" language for all citizens but should not be the only language they have the right to speak.

A number of speakers noted the economic benefits gained – especially in border areas – where languages help to build bridges (Corsican with Italy, Alsatian with Germany, Breton with Wales or Ireland, Catalan with Spain, Francique with Luxemburg, as examples).

Many speakers noted the need for the government to do a better job in insuring that parents are aware of immersion and bilingual programs in schools. A number of speakers pointed out that testing has shown that immersion and bilingual language programs actually help children master French and other subjects better. It was also noted that children in such programs tended to be more open to the world. .

Also noted by many was the need for France to better support the presence of regional languages in the media.

Marc Le Fur of Brittany noted that it is important to keep in mind that those interested in promoting regional languages are not just a small minority (a notion echoed by Jean-Pierre Decool in noting the example of Flemish). He also stated that it is important to fight the notion that regional languages are survivals of the past. He pointed to the fest noz as an example of where one might see clearly how Breton is used for modern creativity and expression. Le Fur also noted (as did

others) that regions with strong identities are often those most open to the world and that the encouragement of regional languages does not lead to closed communities.

Despite a clear consensus that regional languages were a rich and important part of France's heritage, there were expressions of hesitancy – fear that in opening a Pandora's box for regional languages, French may somehow become less valued.

The closing statement by Christine Albanel, Minister of Culture and Communication, to clarify the French government's position was not a surprise, but nevertheless disappointing to those who hoped for concrete action to change the "laissez mourir" direction France has taken for its regional languages. She noted that France has 79 languages (39 in overseas territories). Some have very few speakers, others many. How can one identify criteria by which a language would be eligible for measures in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages if it were ratified? France signed on to 39 of the 98 measures in the Charter. One of these would require the translation of important legislative documents into all the regional languages, so if France ratified the Charter, this would represent an enormous amount of work and cost.

Not only did it seem to Mme Albanel that the ratification of the Charter (which would require modification of the French Constitution) would be a big bother and expense, but she expressed a need for caution in potentially placing regional languages in opposition to French. She noted that the refusal by France to ratify the Charter and to give regional languages an official status in the Constitution does not mean France fails to recognize the importance of those languages. There are, after all, laws already in place to support the development of regional languages – although they are not well known. And, Albanel announced that a new law will be proposed to clarify all this.

So, France will continue to support regional languages by – in Albanel's words - "permitting rather than requiring, encouraging and developing rather than imposing [them]" In other words, doing nothing more than making promises and practicing the benign neglect it does so well.

The following is the analysis of the National Assembly Debate and France's stance on regional languages as reported on the Eurolang website (www.eurolang.net)

One Language, one state: France says "Non" to its 'regional' languages

Bruxelles - Brussel, Friday, 09 May 2008 by Davyth Hicks

The French Government refused on Wednesday (7th May) to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) or to modify their constitution to allow for some recognition of the languages on its territories. A new law was proposed for regional languages, but any official status or usage was ruled out. France, however, may find that it has problems - it has ratified the Lisbon Treaty, which, if it comes into force, will require France to respect linguistic diversity and prohibit discrimination against languages and national minorities.

Despite the efforts of deputies from Brittany, led by Marc le Fur and Marylise Lebranchu, Pays Basque, North Catalonia, Corsica, and the Alsace, the French government, represented by Culture Minister Mme Christine Albanel, stuck to its hard line policy on refusing any legal recognition of regional languages. The grounds given being that it would undermine the eighteenth century French centralist idea of one language, one state, set up to unify the regions and countries taken over by France before and after the French revolution.

She ruled out any notion that regional languages have any official status or official usage making it clear that France has no intention of ratifying the European Charter for Minority Languages. She argued that the Charter "is against our principles" because it "implies [...] an inviolable right to speak a regional language, notably in the public sphere," and that ratification is "against constitutional principles fundamental to the indivisibility of the Republic, equality in front of the law and the unity of the French people."

However, in the face of strong arguments from deputies from all the parties, Mme Albanel offered a glimmer of hope with the promise of a new law, "a reference framework", that would fit in with current French law.

Earlier, the President of the Breton Region, Jean Yves le Drian, called for the "right to experimentation" for the regional government in order to provide adequate Breton language provision and language planning.

Marylise Lebranchu, (Penn ar Bed/ Finistère) warned about a new law without constitutional changes: "I said that the law allowing education in the regional language, particularly in the Diwan schools, was censured by the Constitutional Council. It would be frustrating and humiliating if any new law on regional

languages is condemned in advance. We must be careful, because humiliation leads to violence... we need a revision of the Constitution and precise laws. Without it, the experimentation today proposed by the Breton Region, for example, might well be unconstitutional. "

France and the Lisbon Treaty

Commentators have pointed to France's inability to cope with the modern reality of multi- and plurilingualism both within its borders and abroad, despite President Sarkozy's declarations that France must modernise in order to cope with globalisation.

In denying even the most basic linguistic rights for regional language speakers the government's policy undermines the credibility of France both in Europe and the world, and ironically, in the International Year of Languages and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Languages such as Breton, struggling in its regeneration effort with almost no state support or recognition and already on the UNESCO endangered list for languages, now seems condemned to greater struggle. Meanwhile, France loses any credibility globally in its often heard complaints that French should be promoted in the face of the increasing use of English.

Finally, something for language campaigners to consider; there is another problem for France as it continues to flout European standards on regional language protection - it is now in a contradictory position because it has ratified the Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty, which if ratified by all European member states will come in to force, requires that States respect cultural and linguistic diversity (Art.2.3), while the attached Charter of Fundamental Rights (Art. 21) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of language, ethnicity or being member of a national minority. (Eurolang 2008)

In the French Senate, May 13

Nicolas Alfonsi introduced a question directed to the Minister of Culture and Communication, Christine Albanel, on "the protection and transmission of regional and minority languages." In opening the discussion he noted the wide interest in this and his own personal interest as a Corsican. As was the case in the National Assembly discussion, most speakers expressed a strong interest in seeing more done to promote regional languages. A report of all the interventions can be found on France's site for its Senate: www.senat.fr.

Jean-Louis Carrère of the Aquitaine region noted the work done by that region for Occitan and Basque. He

stated that he "does not understand the Jacobin spirit that forbids us from better envisaging the integration of this richness [regional languages] in our Republican and laic structure. Every effort to do this is doomed to fail." He went on to note the case of efforts to integrate Diwan into the public school system.

Gérard Le Cam, Senator from the Côtes d'Armor of Brittany, underlined that defending regional languages was not related to sectarianism or regionalism – a sentiment repeated by others. He spoke of the fact that 92% of Breton people wanted to preserve the Breton language and that schools were an important part. He cited the public and Catholic bilingual schools and as he spoke the word "Diwan", Senator Jean-Luc Mélenchon interrupted with "That's a sect." Le Cam continued to speak of the investment made by the region of Brittany in the support of Breton – twelve times more than the investment made by France (just 3.2 million euros between 2000 to 2006). Clearly France can give stronger support instead of keeping regional language education marginalized.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon would go on to speak of his pride in being a Jacobin who only spoke French ... and Spanish, the language of his grandparents. He proclaimed France to be already pro regional languages and lauded all it had done for them. "Nothing in France's legal and regulatory structure prevents the practice or transmission of regional languages." He went on to discuss how the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages does not clarify which languages should qualify for protection. He asked if the "Breton" identified would be the unified language created by a Nazi collaborator [referring to Roparz Hemon] or is it to be one of five Breton dialects replaced by that. One is not surprised that he claimed to love regional languages as much as the next guy but cautioned that there was a risk of using them to promote sectarianism. This caution to beware extremists was also expressed by Colette Mélot who felt France was already doing a lot to promote regional languages.

Gélita Hoarau and Alima Boumediene-Thiery both noted the diversity of creole languages and the fact that in colonizing islands of the Caribbean and Pacific the eradication of such languages was built into administration and education. It was noted that regional languages do not replace French or threaten French unity, but give people rootedness and social cohesion. Boumediene-Thiery ended her thoughts with a Breton proverb: "A people who lose their language, lose their soul."

Raymond Couderic in speaking of Occitan noted that "the defense and promotion of regional languages is an international obligation for France," and there is a need

especially to get rid of judicial blocks that impact educational advances. Jean-Paul Alduy, a Catalan speaker, noted that “law must impose not only respect for these [regional] languages, but also their defense. Respect is not enough.” People need the legal right to speak languages which foster plural identities which are important to communication in Europe.

Odette Herviaux, Senator from the Morbihan of Brittany, noted that administrative blocks have meant that the situation of regional languages has in fact degraded since France signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1999. A change is needed in the constitution so that advances are possible and regions need to be given real power to continue their work for regional languages.

The response to all this discussion in the Senate by Christine Albanel, Minister of Culture and Communication, was pretty much the same as her response to Deputies in the National Assembly. France will not modify the constitution nor ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages since this would be contrary to France’s indivisibility and the equality of all. She also brought up again the impracticality of requiring public officials to master so many different languages and the tremendous cost to do translations of legal documents that the European Charter would require. She noted that France was already doing well to promote languages – after all 400,000 children are studying regional languages in bilingual schools. France has also been liberal in allowing a presence for these languages in media and in its support of theater, literature and cinema. And once again she noted that there are lots of legislative tools already out there for those promoting regional languages – although the government needs to make them clearer.

Once again, despite the urging by Senators and Deputies from many regions of France and its overseas territories to give needed legal recognition to regional languages, France’s response is NO.

Particularly appalling is the implication made by Minister Albanel that France is already doing wonderful things for its regional languages and that there are already lots of laws and regulations that are being underused. Well, the miracle cure/law is definitely not there yet to be discovered. As the majority of Deputies and Senators speaking attested, France is simply not doing enough and that any real advances will continue to be blocked by the Article 2 of the Constitution: “French is the language of the Republic.” It is clear that the French government has no intention to make any changes that will make a real impact. Despite the disheartening conclusion that France really does not want to protect the linguistic and cultural richness within its borders,

one can be encouraged by the discussion in both the National Assembly and Senate of France where the majority of Deputies and Senators truly do “get it” and have been listening to the people they represent.

The irony of France being a country that proclaims its leading role in the protection of international cultural and linguistic rights while blocking advances in its own home territory has not gone unnoticed. Given the repeated NO those promoting regional languages have gotten to the simplest advances, it is not surprising that they have sought support from the international community. The following article from the Eurolang website (www.eurolang.net) documents one such effort,

NGOs at the UN denounce French discrimination against its ‘regional’ languages

Bruxelles - Brussel, Thursday, 01 May 2008 by Davyth Hicks

In the run up to French National Assembly’s debate regional languages and cultures on May 7th, language activists went to the UN at Geneva earlier this week to denounce France’s report on its implementation of the UN’s International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Members of the UN Committee have previously made the observation that France “had not advanced one iota” on the ratification of international instruments protecting minority languages and cultures.

The NGOs present were: EBLUL-France, the French section of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, the Cultural Council of Brittany, the Institut d’Etudes Occitan, Culture and Bilingualism of Alsace and Moselle, the Federation for the Catalan language and culture, Schola Corsa, Advocacy for the Langue d’Oïl, and Behatokia (the Basque language observatory).

Together they underlined the numerous inaccuracies and approximations of the report submitted by France with regard to linguistic and cultural rights. A joint press release stated that: “We were able to show that despite assertions by France, the absence of a collective right in this area leads to blatant discrimination against speakers of regional languages, both in the field of education, the media, and in public life in general.”

The Tamazgha association, which works to defend the Berber language and culture, also intervened to point out that the report of France was “silent on regional or minority languages present on its territory, including Berber, which is totally absent from the curriculum in France”.

The Bretagne Réunie association also called for respect for the cultural identity of the south Breton department of Loire-Atlantique, sectioned off from Brittany by the Nazi-backed Vichy Government in 1941.

The NGOs jointly requested: “that the UN Committee reiterates and reinforces its demand that France, a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, ratifies and implements international conventions, including the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages and takes specific measures to effectively safeguard the regional and minority languages of France now in danger of extinction.” (Eurolang 2008)

But is there hope after all? ... Back at the National Assembly, May 22

Deputies of the National Assembly adopted an amendment to Article 1 of the French constitution which added the words: “The regional languages belong to its [France’s] patrimony.”

This addition to the French Constitution which passed by a near unanimous vote of Deputies from all parties is surely worthy of celebration. But it has yet to pass the Senate and to be voted on in a congress of both the Assembly and Senate.

In a number of news releases Bretons have cautioned that Article 2 of the Constitution still states “French is the language of the Republic” (despite numerous proposals to amend this wording to include regional languages). Will this statement continue to be used for the same legal blocks to rights for regional languages?

The new amendment for Article 1 does not guarantee any legal rights for regional languages. The recognition of the existence of regional languages in France is an important step, but in their reaction to this vote by the National Assembly, Bretons are correctly pointing out that this is no “silver bullet” and advances for the Breton language will continue to depend on the hard work of Bretons themselves to create a place for Breton in their daily lives.

It is easy to remain skeptical about France’s intention to truly support its regional languages. But, the fact that so much debate has been introduced into the National Assembly and Senate is cause for optimism. There are many leaders in France who feel passionately that languages like Breton, Occitan, Alsatian, Flemish, Catalan, Corsican and Basque, to mention just a few, deserve much more than a symbolic recognition of their “existence.”

Diwan Culminates a Year in Celebration of 30 Years of Educational Excellence

Lois Kuter

The Diwan Breton language immersion schools have been celebrating their 30 years of success in a variety of ways throughout this past year – from the organization of a scrabble tournament in Breton to eco-fairs and festoù-noz.

Diwan opened its doors with its first pre-school in the spring of 1977 in Ploudalmézeau, quickly followed by schools in Plomelin (Quimper), Plounéour-Menez and then Rennes, Brest, St. Pol de Léon, Lorient, Lannion, Nantes and other cities and towns. The first primary school opened in Lannilis in 1980 and the first middle school opened in Brest in 1985. In 1994 a high school opened at Relecq-Kerhuon (Brest) which moved to the current site in Carhaix in 1999.

Today there are 36 pre/primary schools, five middle schools, and one high school with close to 3,000 students. In September 2008 a new middle school - Skolaj Diwan Liger-Atlantel - will open in Nantes to serve Diwan students in the Loire-Atlantique department who want to continue their studies in Diwan after primary school. As is the case for all new Diwan schools, this school will need a great deal of public financial support during its first years of operation. For more information or to send support see the website www.diwan44.org.

Ar Redadeg

A culminating event for the Diwan 30th anniversary was a relay race inspired by that done by for the Basque schools called the Korrika. The Breton race - Ar Redadeg – began just before midnight on April 30 and covered 600 kilometers in a big spiral through towns of Brittany to end in Carhaix on May 3rd for the final grand festival.

Each kilometer of the race was sponsored for 100 euros by various organizations or individuals – including the U.S. ICDBL as you will read below. Runners each covered a kilometer at their own pace, and the race continued day and night without interruption in a big human chain with a “baton” passed from one runner to the next. Other racers could join at any time and this was certainly the case in towns where Diwan schools were found where mini-festivals were organized to cheer on the runners.

On arrival in Carhaix the relay runners were greeted by the Mayor of Carhaix, Christian Troadec, and the race concluded at the Kerampuilh site where the 30th anniversary festival for Diwan was already underway.

Upon arrival the baton carrier came up on stage to read a text that had been carried in the baton written by singer Nolwenn Korbell.

This was by no means the only special text composed for Diwan's 30th anniversary festival. Gweltaz ar Fur, who was the first president of Diwan and a well known singer in the 1970s and early 80s before retiring to found and operate the Ar Bed Keltiek stores, took the stage in Carhaix to sing his newly composed song "Demat Diwan" as well as a song he composed in honor of this town "Kemper-Breizh." For Diwan's 20th anniversary Gweltaz ar Fur was also at work, translating a song in French by Dan ar Braz into Breton: "Diwanit bugale,"

Musicians have very often supported the Diwan schools in performing at benefit concerts and festoù-noz to raise money for schools. And some are "god parents" for a particular school. Gweltaz ar Fur is part of three generations of Diwan as his son and grandson have been Diwan students. His return on stage was warmly welcomed at the Diwan festival which included a large line-up of Breton singers and musicians of all styles – from the traditional to rap and hip-hop ... all in the Breton language, evel just!

And the festivities in Carhaix also included theater, sports, cinema, the final skrabell contest, a book exposition, and several conference presentations about Diwan and immersive language education. Concerts and festoù-noz involved dozens of performers, including Diwan children themselves.

For more information about the Ar Redadeg race check out the website: <http://arredadeg.free.fr>

An Eye-Witness Account of the Ar Redadeg from Banaleg

By David Pugh

A sponsored run has taken place for the 30th anniversary of the Diwan Schools. Starting in Naoned (Nantes) at midnight on April 30 and passing through, inter alia, Gwened, An Aire, An Oriant, Kemper, Brest, Montroulez and Gwengamp before arriving in Karaez (Carhaix), some 600 Km (360 miles) later, the run came through Banaleg at 2.45 am on May 2.

Thanks to a specific donation, U.S. ICDBL was able to sponsor a kilometer of the run at a cost of Euro 100 (\$160) and thus participate in the historic event.

In Banaleg, a Fest Noz was organized at the tourist office and the small square in front of it. Attendance was reasonable early on but as the night became chilly the group was reduced to hardy stalwarts. Even some

of these moved to the Tavarn Solange (Café de la Marie) for an hour or so around midnight where the music and dancing continued in somewhat heartier surroundings.

At 1.15 am word came that the runners had left Kemperle and were on their way surrounded by a small motorcade with flashing lights, music and a huge box of apples. In Banaleg, the many children who had been kept going by an inexhaustible supply of freshly made crepes (and possibly some of the mulled wine), slowed down their games and those who hadn't done so earlier began to put on their Ar Redadeg T-shirts. At 2.30am an advance vehicle came into town and half of the group walked to the town entrance to greet the dozen or so runners. For the 2Km passage through the town the children, mostly from Skol Diwan Banaleg, joined the runners and accompanied them through town. Most of the shops had special signs in their windows, made at the Diwan school and giving them their names in Breton - Tavarn, An Apotiker, Ti Bank, Ti ar C'higer (Charcouterie), Stal Lunedou (Optician), Ispisiri (8 a Huit – a French type 7-11), Leunvour (Osteopath), Ti Krampouezh, Baraerdi etc.

A plate of crepes was on hand for the runners who needed more than an apple to keep them going. The flashing lights could be seen and then, quite suddenly, at 2.50am, they came – and went - on their way. I must admit to slight disappointment that there wasn't a small stop to acknowledge the music, claps and cheers, but a run is a run and you can't afford to stop just for a chat.

At the end there were about 30 of us (including the Mayor and his wife), plus the children, who had waited – and it was worth it! The kids came running back to the center of town and were hustled off to bed, the adults were mostly quiet, drinking in the experience and wishing well the runners who were continuing as well as those from Banaleg who joined them for the next section.

On arrival in Karaez on Saturday it was estimated that between 3 – 5,000 people had taken part in the run at various points (it is notoriously hard to count running children. Sponsorships totaled nearly 700 Km so around US \$112,000 was raised before counting sales of T-shirts and any benefits from the various concerts and Fest Noz and Diez that took place (plus a Breton Scrabble contest, Breton sports, films and special events for children).



Other (Good) News from Brittany

The following information was gleaned from various internet sites as well as the following publications: *Musique Bretonne* 207 (mars-avril 2008), *Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg* 76 (meurzh 2008). – Lois Kuter

Taol Lañs – A Contest for New Songs in the Breton Language

This contest to showcase new song compositions in the Breton language will take place for the second year in Carhaix on Friday, May 30. It is organized by Diwanet, an association for Diwan school alumni, and Dazont ar Brezhoneg, an organization that puts together the Breton language festival Gouel ar Brezhoneg to be held Saturday May 31.

Twelve groups of varying styles have been chosen to compete: Egin (Plomeur), Fast-Noise Trade (Camors), Francis Jackson Project (Cavan), Gouez (Coueron), Katellig (Rennes), Langoët Kaou (Rennes), Prim (Nantes), Roc'h Traez (Bannalec), Rock 'n diroll (Merlevenez), Sharmaka (Quimper), Tomaz ar Voig ha Mignoned (Brussels).

Winners will have the opportunity to perform at other important festivals of Brittany: Gouel ar Brezhoneg, Festival des Vieilles Charrues, Pan Celtic Festival (in Ireland), Festival des Filets Bleu, and the Taol Kurun festival.

Prizioù – Awards for Breton Language Creativity

For the 11th year, the television station FR3 awarded prizes in a variety of categories for Breton language creativity.

The prize for the best novel in Breton went to Gégé Gwenn for *An deiz hirgortozet* (published by Skol Vreizh) which focuses on social unrest in the Menez Are (Monts d'Arrée) area of western Brittany in the 1970s. Other nominees were: Yann Bijer for *Avel Gornôg* (Al Liamm) and Mich Beyer for *Etrezek an Enez* (An Alarc'h).

The prize for best CD recording went to Yann Raoul for *Les figurants* (L'OZ Production) in recognition of the excellence of his song texts in Breton. Other nominees for CDs were Ramoneurs de Menhirs for *Dañs an Diaoul* and Toud' Sames for *Son an den dilabour*.

The prize for the best TV film was awarded to Erwan and Tangi Kermarrec for *War an Uhel*, a documentary filmed in the Himalayan mountains (Label Production & France 3 Ouest). Other nominees were Jean-Pierre Lyvynec for *Evel pesked en dour* (France 3 Ouest) and

Bernez Quillien and Didier Boussard for *Ur mor a galon* (France 3 Ouest).

The prize for the best expression in Breton was awarded to Nolwenn Korbell for her CD *Red* (Coop Breizh) in recognition of her creative use of language and its strong rhythmic fit to the music of Soig Siberil. Other nominees in this category were Lan Tangi for his novel *Diwar un huel* (Skrid), and Bastian Guillou for his film *Piti, Piti... Chou!* (France 3 Ouest).

The prize for the “Breton speaker of the year” went to Diwan in recognition of its 30th anniversary and the impact the Diwan Breton language immersion schools have had on the development of bilingual education for children in Brittany. Other nominees in this category were the Ofis ar Brezhoneg for its Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign to engage towns and cities in Breton language work, and the organization Mervent for its work to engage 4,000 adult learners in Breton classes.

An honorary prize was awarded to Fañch Broudic, retiring from France 3 after 37 years of work for Breton language programming on that television station.

Columbo on DVD and Speaking Breton

For ten years the organization called Dizale has specialized in “doubling” in Breton on films using a variety of Breton speakers to take on the voices of characters in movies or animation. Dizale has produced films for TV Breizh and is now working with Brezhoweb.com to get films on the internet.

The Columbo DVD is composed of three episodes (each 1 ½ hours long) drawn from three different periods of this long-running American TV series. One can get this Breton language film subtitled in Breton or French. Somehow it is difficult to imagine a Breton-speaking Inspector Columbo, and surely it must have been a challenge to capture the unique accent and voice which adds so much to his character.

Another DVD now available is an annotated film “Enez Black Mór” (The Island of Black Mor), a pirate adventure set in maritime Brittany. Dizale is also doubling the film by Claude Chabrol, “Le Cheval d'Orgeuil” – an adaptation of the famous book by Per Jakez Hélias (The Horse of Pride, in its English translation). The French language movie was filmed in the Bigouden region of Brittany, and for the Breton language version the Dizale crew will work on using the Breton language as it is spoken in the Bigouden area. There are lots of projects in the works for Dizale, so check out the website www.brezhoweb.com to catch a glimpse.

A New Old Dictionary Now Accessible

For the eight volumes and 9,000 pages produced between 1790 and 1827 Pierre Joseph Jean, Chevalier de Coëtanlem, worked away in his chateau near Morlaix to recopy a Breton-French dictionary published in 1750-60 by Dom Louis Le Pelletier. Not only did he recopy words and translations, but he added copious notes on the history of each word, local uses, and dialectical evolutions. The one copy in existence of this dictionary was saved from a fire in the 1930s and was ultimately purchased in 2003 by the Centre de Recherches Bretonnes et Celtiques at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest for 38,000 euros. So far, two volumes have been indexed and put on line on the internet, with the rest to follow in time. You can find it on www.hermine.org.

C'hoariva, an Association to Promote Theater in Breton

C'hoariva was created in 2005 to federate professional and amateur Breton language theater troupes in Brittany. Currently there are three professional, one semi-professional and twelve amateur groups in the organization. The goal of C'hoariva is to help troupes develop high quality productions – improving both the quality of acting and technical presentation. C'hoariva has published “exercise” books with short skits for schools and community groups to use, and organizes an annual conference. Its internet site www.teatr-brezhonek.org also promotes theater in Breton by getting news out about new productions and performances.

The following are the theater groups of C'hoariva. If you travel to Brittany take the opportunity to see a show:

Strollad ar vro bagan (Plouguerneau)
Barzhanoff (Rennes)
C'hoarivari (Brandérion)
Compagnie Bitrak (Plounéour-Menez)
Deomp ar Gwar
Pik Achu (Riantec)
Strollad Kallag (Callac)
Strollad Kastell (St. Pol de Leon)
Strollad Lesvenen (Lesneven)
Strollad Plougin (Tréouergat)
Teatr Penn ar Bed (Brest)
Al Alouberion
Hemon Prod (Le Relecq-Kerhuon)
Skolaj Diwan Jakez Riou (Quimper)
Elektrak (Nantes)
Pirate Puttet Cie (Sizun)

Kanomp Breizh – Breton Language Choral Groups

Since 2004 Kanomp Breizh has served as an organization to federate 23 choirs with approximately 1,200 singers in all five departments of Brittany who perform in the Breton language. The association organizes a contest of song in Breton each July as part of the Kan al Loar festival in Landerneau. At its general assembly in March Kanomp Breizh formally signed onto the “Ya d'ar Brezhoneg” campaign to incorporate Breton more into its “unsung” operations.



INTERNATIONAL CELTIC CONGRESS

This now-annual inter-Celtic gathering is rooted in the visit by a delegation of Bretons to the Welsh Eisteddfod in 1838. In his book, *Histoire chronologique des pays celtiques*, Jakez Gaucher notes that the second Inter-Celtic Congress was held in St. Brieuc in 1867.

In the last fifty years the Congress has been held more regularly, rotating to one of six Celtic countries each year (Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland or the Isle of Man). In 2006 the Congress was held in Brittany in Carhaix and in 2007 it was held in Cornwall at Tremough en Penryn.

Each year a theme is selected for a week of conferences to which are always added exhibits and performances. In 2007 the theme centered on the contribution of Celtic emigrants to art, science, and industry. Plenty to talk about there.

For 2008 the International Celtic Congress will be held July 28 to August 2 on the Penglais campus of the University of Wales Aberystwyth. The theme for this year is the protection of the environment and sustainable development in the Celtic countries.



Say it in Breton ...

(from Ofis Ar Brezhoneg / www.ofis-bzh.org)



KENTEL 11 / LESSON 11

Natalie Novik

GERIADURIG / VOCABULARY

Remember, like in French, words are either masculine (m) or feminine (f). It's important to learn this, because it will affect the mutation of the first letter and the words around it:

Korf (m)	body
Penn (m)	head
Fri (m)	nose
Genou (m), beg (m)	mouth
Gouzoug (m)	neck
Bruched (m)	breast

That looks like a very short list. But it's the list of body parts that come in one. Now for things that come in twos:

Lagad(m) / daoulagad	eye / eyes
Brec'h (f) / divrec'h	arm / arms
Gar (f) / divhar	leg / legs
Skouarn (f) / divskouarn	ear / ears
Dorn (m) / daouzorn	hand / hands
Troad(m) / daoutroad	foot / feet

When you talk about your hands, you talk about your two hands, not plural hands. Same about your eyes, your legs, any part of the body that comes in two.

If you come across a phone book from Brittany, you will recognize a lot of these words in the family names like Le Pen, Le Gareg (the one with big legs), Le Skouarneg (the one with large ears), Le Troadeg (the one with large feet) and so on. Pen means head not only physically, but also head as in leader. Beg is not only a mouth, it's also a beak (for a bird) and a cape or point (over the sea).

YEZADUR / GRAMMAR

How to translate "to have," when the verb "to have" does not exist???

As we said before, the Breton sentence emphasizes what is important by placing it first. Therefore there will be several ways of expressing "I have" depending on the meaning:

In Breton	Literally	Example
AM-EUS	I possess	Eun ti am-eus (I possess a house)
A ZO GANIN	(There) is with me	Eun tok a zo ganin (there is a hat with me, I have a hat)
A ZO DA	Belongs to (for animates)	Ar hi-mañ a zo da Ber (this dog belongs to Per) (Peter in Breton)
A ZO WAR or A ZO OUZ	Belongs to (for plants and things)	Ped prenest a zo war an ti-mañ? (how many windows belong on this house? how many windows has this house?)

There are also very colloquial ways of saying things:

Me a zo louz va daouarn I have dirty both my hands (my hands are dirty)

Hennez a zo hir e 'fri That one has long his nose (This one has a long nose).

Learn these sentences by heart as much as possible (sometimes you will recognize similar turns in songs), they are very different from English or French, and therefore require a special effort. But this is the way the Bretons think and speak.

BOOK REVIEWS

Jef GEDEZ, *Tiriadoù ar Gwalarn*.

Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2001. 156 pages. ISBN 2-86863-130-4. Pen and ink drawings by François-Philippe Lecoulant.

Reviewed by Kevin J. Rottet, Indiana University

This is the fictional story of a man named Mik, the youngest of three brothers from Brittany, whose adventurous spirit takes him overseas and ever closer to the Northwest Territories ("Tiriadoù ar Gwalarn"), in pursuit of a kind of spiritual merger with nature, until in the end he is never heard from again. The story is narrated by Bleru, the middle brother, though most of the text consists of long letters he received from Mik during the latter's travels. The enchantment of indigenous names, one of the book's major themes, emerges early on as we learn that the three brothers, Mik, Bleru and Chug, like many Bretons, are called by nicknames because their real first names bear the stamp of a foreign origin.

We learn that as a child, Mik was much too tall for his age—when he was five, Bleru seven and Chug nine, they were all the same size—and because he towered over his classmates, he was never really accepted by them. His unusual size seems to have been accompanied by a failure to reach conventional adulthood mentally and emotionally, for we learn that Mik lived in a world populated by the heroes of adolescent adventure novels by James Fenimore Cooper, James Oliver Curwood, Rudyard Kipling, Jules Verne, and Jack London.

As a young man, Mik's plan to run a bookshop gets put on hold by a journey to New York in an attempt to relocate Paol, his mother's brother who ran a restaurant in Brooklyn, but with whom the family had mysteriously lost contact. Mik returns from the States and narrates his first trip to the New World. Unable to relocate Paol, he had become enchanted with the place names of New York state, first those like Rome, Syracuse and Salamanca which were European but not English in origin, and then indigenous toponyms like Ticonderoga, Oneonta, and Minnewaska, names given to the land by its original Iroquois inhabitants. Many of the

captivating names he found on his map became destinations for his travels by canoe along New York's rivers.

Mik is not back in Brittany for very long before he decides to return to the New World, this time to Canada in search of *splannder ar bed*, 'the splendour of the world' as manifested in the pristine wildernesses of Canada, and to follow the allure of ever more exotic place names (Nottawasaga, Ganaraska, Katchewanoo, Penetanguishene). Landing in Toronto, he gradually makes his way westward, and the reader follows his journey via letters sent home to Bleru. The letters recount a number of encounters with Native Americans and also some brief retellings of their folktales, interwoven with Mik's memories of the adventure novels of his boyhood. One of his journeys is with a team of researchers and scientists tracking humpbacked whales in British Columbia. While on the West Coast Mik becomes so imbued with the Natives' spiritual quest for *an arzh speredel*, the white bear of Native mysticism, that he ultimately heads out alone into the wilderness for six months, to live in a cave, as close to the bears as possible. Fellow, his nickname for one of the research scientists whom he befriended, helps him locate and settle into a very isolated cave, promising to return for him in January. Yet the winter is unusually rough, and by the time Fellow is able to get to the cave Mik is gone, having set off for the North eight days earlier on foot. He has left one last letter for his brother Bleru, whose subsequent attempts to find him through the team of research scientists proves fruitless, and Mik is never heard from again.

Although there are a few things a reader might quibble with, such as the consistent misspelling of "Ojibwe" as "Objiwe" or the references to James Fenimore Cooper without his first name, this is an entertaining story enlivened by pen and ink drawings, written in a language that, for the most part, would be accessible to high intermediate learners. The story invites the reader to find kinship with native peoples of a distant land whose world, though in many ways very different, involves confronting similar realities.

A Loss in the U.S. ICDBL Family

James Wilson Kerr III

(1921-2008)

A long-time member of the U.S. ICDBL Board of Consultants, Jim Kerr passed away on March 18, 2008, after a valiant effort to recover from a series of strokes he suffered in 2004.

I first heard from Jim Kerr in August 1982. He sent a quick note on a little scrap of paper: "Just read about ICDBL in Fr Journal. Family moved to Scotland from Quimper about year 1100 AD." That was an intriguing start. In addition, on the envelope Jim had written "Breiz Atao" above his return address. Far from being a political radical, Jim was definitely in favor of a Brittany where the Breton language and music would flourish.

I would receive many quick notes from Jim and we would chat from time to time by telephone. When he first joined the U.S. ICDBL Jim lived in Falls Church, Virginia. He would later move to Florida to take a post-retirement job with a stamp dealer. Jim was a avid collector and expert on stamps, with a specialty in Korean stamps.

In 1984 Jim agreed to join the Board of Consultants of the U.S. ICDBL. Here's how he was introduced (introduced himself) to members in the February 1984 issue of Newsletter No. 10 of the U.S. ICDBL (yet to be named Bro Nevez):

As his name might tell you, James W. Kerr has a Scottish family background (with a little Irish and Breton). He was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1921 and has worked with the U.S. Government as an executive and in nuclear physics. He has a BS in Chemistry, an MS in Physics and has done some Postgraduate work in Medieval French. He is fluent in French and German and has some Spanish, Korean and Italian as well as a touch of Russian, Breton, Portuguese, Japanese and Old French. He is a registered professional engineer and retired Regular Army officer. It was through his Army experiences that he gained a love for Brittany – with work along side Bretons during three years with the French Army. His Breton leanings also include skills as a semi-professional singer, with some Breton songs in his repertoire. He has also explored Brittany as a reviewer of books for the Explorers Club. He brings to the ICDBL his willingness to actively contribute his time and efforts to serving on our Board of Directors.

Jim continued to serve on the Board and subsequent self-descriptions for Board election ballots would reveal a bit more about his broad experience. Here's a bit more from a 2002 introduction of elected and reelected U.S. ICDBL officers from Bro Nevez 82 (May 2002). This gives just a hint of Jim's strong sense of humor.

James W. Kerr (Easton, Maryland). U.S. ICDBL member since 1983. Family moved (most of it) to Scotland about 1100 A.D. Retired Regular Army officer, career including three years with French Army in Germany, resulting in many Breton friends and a preoccupation with their language as well as Scottish affairs. Once active as a musician, including some Breton singing, now quieter. Degrees in chemistry, nuclear physics, and public administration (PhD.). Have lived in Washington D.C., Florida and Alabama before settling in Maryland. Have been active with fire departments, Explorer Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, theater, and have represented the Clan Kerr at Scottish Games for a number of years. Have served on the ICDBL Board of Director (repeat offender) since 1984, and am ready to continue to offer my services.

Jim was a practical man and was always the first to respond when I asked the ICDBL Board for ideas or guidance. In 1989 he offered his set of Henderson Highland bagpipes for sale with the proceeds to go to the U.S. ICDBL and the Diwan Breton language schools. Jim never lacked for good ideas and certainly never lacked generosity.

In 2004 Jim suffered a series of strokes. With the support of his family and friends he would pull through and work on physical therapy to move forward again. Jim never lost his keen sense of humor nor his interest in Brittany and the Breton language but found himself forced to retire from the U.S., ICDBL.

He was 87 years old when he died of an acute stroke and all the complications from his past illnesses. Not wanting a funeral, his family nevertheless sent him off in style at the Loudon Park Cemetery in Baltimore where the Kerr family is buried. Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" was read (at Jim's request) and the graveside ceremony included bagpipes, full military honors, and a toast with single-malt scotch.

Kenavo Jim. We hope you will meet some of your Breton friends and sing a few songs in *baradoz*.

Lois Kuter

A New Website about Breton Composers

Reviewed by Keith Davies Jones

Sonaozerien Breizh – Compositeurs Bretons

- is a fully bilingual (French & Breton) web-site developed by Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez, and is the most comprehensive resource available in the Breton language for anyone interested in Breton composers.

<http://www.compositeursbretons.com/www/sonaozer/fra/compositeurs.asp>

This expertly produced and well-referenced site includes a brief history of music in Brittany, a French-Breton lexicon of musical terms; and biographies of the most significant Breton composers; Louis-Francois-Marie Aubert, Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, Jean Cras, Maurice Duhamel, Paul Ladmirault, Jean Langlais, Paul Le Flem, Jef Le Penven, René-Emmanuel Rhené-Baton, Joseph Guy Ropartz & Louis Vuillemin.

They are an heterogeneous group of composers, representing a wide stylistic range, all of them, however, in some way indelibly marked by the landscape of Brittany. Three of them, Maurice Duhamel and Paul Ladmirault, both described as 'militant/emsaver breton', and Jef Le Penven, devoted their lives to the creation of a Breton national music, living in Brittany, and drawing inspiration from its culture. The most politically active of them, Duhamel, joined the Breton Regionalist Union/Kevredigezh Broadel Breizh in 1912, and was later a founder-member of the Breton Independence Party/Stollad Emrenerien Breizh. Others, such as Ropartz and Le Flem, spending the larger part of their careers in Nancy and in Paris respectively, had their musical and spiritual roots deeply implanted in Breton soil, to which they physically returned in retirement. What may be termed a 'nationalist' school in Breton composition is represented by Duhamel, Ladmirault, Ropartz and Vuillemin who together in 1912 founded the Association of Breton Composers / Kevredigezh Sonaozourien Breizh. The least connected to Brittany appears to have been Louis Aubert, a child-prodigy who spent most of his life in the Pays basque and in Paris. However, his best known piece nowadays is a single work that drew its inspiration from the town of his birth, St Malo. 'Le tombeau de Chateaubriand' was composed in 1948 for the centenary of the death of the writer, who is buried on the Island of Grand-Bé. Bourgault-

Ducoudray emerges as an interesting figure in his own right, having up till now been mostly known, if at all, to this writer at least, as one of Debussy's teachers at the Paris conservatoire. He was one of the earliest collectors of Breton folk-songs, and a number of his major works, including an opera 'Myrdhin' have Breton themes; interestingly, one piece has as its title a town in Wales, 'Abergavenny'. Jean Langlais, known around the world as a prolific composer for the organ, is found to have composed in other genres also, including a Suite bretonne for piano and a number of choral works with Breton themes.

More extensive biographies of all of these composers can be found in Vefa de Bellaing's Dictionnaire des Compositeurs de musique en Bretagne (Ouest Editions, Nantes, 1992); this richly informative site complements the Dictionnaire with much up-to date information, including discographies of the composers mentioned above, listings of upcoming concerts in Brittany and radio broadcasts of music by Breton composers; and also brief audio extracts of works by Le Flem, Cras, Ropartz and Bourgault-Ducoudray.

Those with an interest in classical music and Breton composers may want to find other articles by Keith Davies Jones:

"Paul Ladmirault - Ami de Warlock," *Peter Warlock Society Newsletter* No. 69 2001 p12-13

"Paul Ladmirault (A "Classical" Side to Breton Music)" *Bro Nevez* No 86 May 2003 p10-11

"Brittany – Streets ahead of Wales" *Yr Enfys* Rhif 6/04 Hâf 2004 p24-25

"Paul Le Flem – Breton Composer" *Bro Nevez* No. 97 February 2006 p 7-8

"Composers of Brittany" *Welsh Music/Cerddoriaeth Cymru* Cyf.X Rhif. 9/10 Hâf 2006 tud. 31-36

"Joseph-Guy Ropartz ou Le pays inaccessible" Introduction and book review, *Bro Nevez* No. 100 November 2006 p11-12

"Mériadec Rufet. Les Coulisses de l'imaginaire" (review), *International Trombone Association Journal* (in press)



New Music from Brittany

Jorj Botuha, Pascal Guingo, Philippe Quillay, Pascal Marsault. *Plijadur*. Association Plijadur CD JB10508/1. 60'23.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This CD features a trio of bombarde, biniou koz and biniou braz. The bombarde is an oboe unique to Brittany which more closely resembles a trumpet in sound. The biniou koz is a small high pitched bagpipe, and the biniou braz is a Scottish Highland style bagpipes which the Bretons have made their own. These three instruments are among the loudest non-amplified musical instruments in the world and putting them together truly packs a punch. The combination of all three is not normally done in Brittany to perform the traditional dances, marches and melodies you hear on this CD. One would usually find bombarde paired with biniou koz *or* biniou braz where the bombarde plays a phrase with the biniou responding. And on this CD you also have bombarde in pair with organ in the same type of responsive combination. The interplay of instruments does not mean they copy each other's phrases exactly and there is always a certain freeness in the blend.

Combining three very powerful instruments – bombarde, biniou koz and biniou braz - in trio is not something for a beginner. But, here you have three masters of these instruments who have played together for many years. Jorj Botuha on bombarde has played in pair with Pascal Guingo on biniou braz since 1981 and they have won nine championship titles at the Gourin competition for “sonneurs de couple.” Jorj Botuha has paired his bombarde with Philippe Quillay's biniou koz for just ten years, and they have won four championship titles as a duo. At the 2007 Gourin Championship the pairs of Botuha/Quillay and Botuha/Guingo took both titles.

In addition to being a master bombarde player Jorj Botuha is a bombarde and biniou maker by profession. Both Pascal Guingo and Philippe Quillay have been members of the Bagad of Auray which has won numerous championship contests for this unique “bagpipe band” of Brittany. The fourth musician on this CD is organist Pascal Marsault who is classically trained on the big pipe organ. During time spent helping to develop the Centre de Musique Sacré of Sainte-Anne d'Auray he had the opportunity to develop a knowledge of traditional Breton music, working with a number of musicians besides Jorj Botuha.

This is the first CD to feature these masters and a fine one it is. The melodies, marches and dance tunes are drawn from the Vannetais region, learned from master “sonneurs” such as Yvon Palamour or Jean Magadur, or from singers of the area who have a particularly rich repertoire.

Nine of the sixteen selections on the CD are performed by the bombarde, biniou koz and biniou braz trio. These include four suites of laridé dances, two suites for the an dro, two sets of march tunes, and one slower melody. One is struck by the easy swing and elegance of the dances where the music urges you to get to your feet but you are not rushed into a high speed race. There's a great deal of energy and rhythmic thrust but not at a frenzied pace.

In three selections bombarde is paired with just the biniou koz for a melody and suites of marches and the dance laridé. For the suites of dances and marches, Jorj Botuha follows in the footsteps of Jean Magadur (born in 1908), drawing from his repertoire and using instruments he constructed based on ones Magadur himself owned. And like Magadur he uses reeds made from box wood instead of cane. These reeds give the bombarde a very different tone. The unusual swing and tonality of the marches especially give one the feeling of being in North Africa instead of southern Brittany.

Perhaps this is not an accident. A penchant for this particular “sound” would not be surprising since Jorj Botuha has worked with musicians from North Africa and, like many other Breton musicians, has listened to and appreciated traditional music from all over the world. His interest in traditional music of the Maghreb is noted in the composition of tunes for the dance an dro included on this CD called “Ker Djebel Ploumaghreb.” There is much in the sound of this CD – especially in the dances – that would make a novice to Breton music think they were hearing music originating far from France and Western Europe.

The CD includes just one pairing of bombarde and biniou braz – a lovely slow melody. I would have loved to hear more of this duo since one could really hear the finesse in the playing of Botuha and Guingo which gets a little obscured in the trio.

The CD closes with three duos of bombarde and organ – three melodies from traditional songs of the Vannetais, including a song passed down to Jorj Botuha from his grandfather Gabriel Robic who was a well

known singer. These performances are recorded in the Basilica of Sainte-Anne d'Auray. The pairing of bombarde and big church pipe organ is not an ancient tradition for Brittany, but since the 1970s this happy combination has created an opportunity to present both a secular and religious repertoire in a new way. As one finds in the pairing of bombarde and bagpipes, here too, there is a creative interplay between musicians.

I don't think there can be any instruments more challenging to record – especially in trio – than the bombarde, biniou koz and biniou braz. The sound quality on this CD is excellent, allowing you to really hear each of the instruments. The prominence of the drone of the biniou braz is a little distracting on several cuts, but maybe this was a quirk of my speaker system. I would have appreciated just a little more of a break between some cuts on the CD to take a breath or two before launching into a new sound experience – just two seconds. Sometimes the start of a selection seemed a bit abrupt to me. All very little things.

The CD comes in an attractive cardboard case and notes include introductions by Donatien Laurent, Laurent Bigot and Pascal Marsault which effectively set the scene. Each selection is introduced, giving an idea of its source and place in the Vannetais tradition. Although I received biographical information about the performers in promotional material, an inclusion of a little more in the CD notes would have been a nice addition. But, Jorj Botuha, Pascal Guingo and Philippe Quillay need no introduction to the piping world of Brittany, nor to those outside of Brittany who love the bombarde and biniou koz and braz.

Plijadur is Breton for “pleasure” and this is surely a CD that will bring great pleasure to those who love Breton music.

HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD New Recordings from Brittany

Notes for the following new releases have been gleaned from reviews and notes in the following Breton magazines: *Armor* 457 (fevr. 2008), 458 (mars 2008) & 459 (avril 2008); *Ar Men* 163 (mars-avril 2008); *Musique bretonne* 206 (janv.-fevr. 2008) & 207 (mars-avril 2008).

Christian Anneix. *Biniou en liberté*. Keltia Musique KMCD 196.

On this new CD Christian Anneix shows off his mastery of the tiny high-pitched bagpipe unique to Brittany, the

biniou koz. He is joined by a number of musicians including his usual partner Jean Baron – in this case pairing the veuze, another bagpipe of Brittany, with the biniou. A number of interesting instrumental combinations are found with biniou and oud, fiddle, piano, various percussion, flutes, marimba and electric guitar for traditional Breton dances, music from 18th century Spain, the Renaissance period, and Quebec.

Duo Barbedette-Quenderff. *Penhoat*. Drom. Drom 007.

Hoëla Barbedette on harp (a student of Anne Auffret and participant in Norkst, Kerdin and Kan Telen) pairs with Sandrine Quenderff on bass fiddle (former member of Kerdin). The themes they play are Breton but take on the flavors of other world traditions. They are joined on some selections by Guillaume Le Guern on clarinet and Nanda Troadec with vocals for a very interesting CD.

Roland Becker. *Chants dans la nuit*. Oyoun Muzik Productions. www.rolandbecker.com

This is an unusual CD from an unusual and extremely creative master musician, Roland Becker. Here Becker uses “samples” of songs collected from traditional singers who would have been born between 1900 and 1910. A master of bombarde, Becker plays a variety of these (in different keys and of different sonorities) with the voices for an interesting rearrangement of traditional sounds.

Bivoac. *Bivoac en concert*. Self-produced.

Bivoac is a trio who present a high-energy live performance with lively dance rhythms, songs by accordion player Ronan Robert, and some off-beat arrangements. A video clip is added to the CD presenting a performance of a “plinn-pong.”

Dastum Bro-Dreger. *Bleuñv a zo, jistr a vo!*

Dastum Bro-Dreger. Encyclopédie sonore du Trégor-Goëlo No. 10.

This is another production by the Dastum branch in the Trégor region on oral traditions and song – this time focused on apple trees, and cider and its production and consumption. The CD has 14 selections and there's also a 17-minute DVD. A PDF file includes transcriptions of the spoken texts and interviews, and words of the songs and their translation into French. Also included is an additional story in Breton and an article by Daniel Giraudon on traditions related to apple trees and cider. And some materials developed by TES are also part of the rich package.

Dastum Bro-Ereg & Archives départementales du Morbihan. *Chants et airs traditionnels du pays vannetais (fin XIXe)*. www.Dastum.net

This new Dastum CD presents songs and themes from the rich Vannetais tradition drawn from an unpublished collection done at the end of the 19th century by two priests : Augustin Guillevic and Jean-Mathurin Cadic. Included are the gwerz (ballads in Breton of a dramatic nature) as well as shorter songs and a few political poems of the period. 260 pages of documentation with the CD includes the original Vannetais Breton language transcriptions and a version in the more standard “peurunvan” Breton with a French translation. On the two 70-minutes CDs songs are interpreted by Sofi Le Hunsec, Loeiz Le Braz and André Le Meut. You also hear 15 dance tunes played by “sonneur” Louis Rio, recorded at a 1899 contest in Vannes.

Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde. *Deiz al Lid*. Keltia Musique RSCD 285.

This ensemble is one of the premier choral groups of Brittany which sing in the Breton language. This new CD borrows texts and melodies from Enya, Dafydd Iwan, Alan Stivell, the Corsican group Muvrini, and a variety of others – all translated into Breton (if not originally in that language) – for a varied and carefully crafted performance. A number of soloists are featured and one can expect a strong performance from this choral group directed by Christian Desbordes.

Hiks. *Drum’n Breizh*. Aztec Musique CM2196.

Hiks is a group of five musicians who play what is described as “electro-rock-punk-traditional Breton” style for dances as well as slower melodies. Musicians of the group are: Yaun Harscoat, Gaël Lefevère, Yann Le Gall, Pierre Droual and Goual Belz, with some back-up from Hervé Le Lu. Electric guitar is combined with fiddle and bombarde.

Gaby Kerdoncuff, Marthe Vassallo & Dominique Molard. *La Coopérative*. Hirustica HIR 200703.

This is a performance by three well-known masters of Breton music – Kerdoncuff on trumpet and bugle, Vassallo with vocals, and Dom Molard with percussion. They are joined by a number of instrumentalists adding accordion, flutes, vibraphone and woodwinds. Breton melodies and compositions take on a world beat and jazz improvisation in this creative “cooperative” of fine Breton musicians. As is often the case these days, a DVD is added to the CD.

Emmanuel Lemare. *Hear the wind blow*. Epona/E. Lemare.

This is the first CD by one of a number of masters of the uilleann pipes in Brittany. Lemare is accompanied by Patrick Lemou on guitar and Florence Lecordier on accordion. Both slow airs and dances from Ireland are included. A fine singer, Lemare also interprets an Irish emigrant song and a ‘complainte’ (ballad) from Brittany.

Morphée. *Les beaux corps aux corbeaux*. Self-produced. www.morpheemusic.com

This is the first CD by a group which hails from Brest.

David Pasquet. *Sa différence*. Coop Breizh CD 998.

Composer, bombarde and clarinet player David Pasquet leads a group which includes also Cédéric Moujour on electric guitar, Jean-Marc Zillien on keyboard, and Mickaël Cozien on bagpipes and gaita. The music is described as “electro-acoustic with accents of rock,” One reviewer notes that efforts to create a hip-hop/slam style for Breton songs have a ways to go, but Pasquet’s work is always interesting.

Les Pirates. *Ne pleurez pas les filles*. Phare Ouest PO 193 504.

Four young women from Cancale draw from maritime songs collected in the 1970s by seaman Auguste Van de Zande (19—to 1984). His voice can be heard on a few short stories. Barely out of their teens “Les Pirates” are not the usual faces one sees in the maritime genre where men dominate, but this group has gotten strong reviews.

Arnaud Royer. *Melen*. Lerig KCD 195.

This is a CD of “solo” guitar with strings added in many layers of guitars and loops of electro-acoustic voices by this creative musician. The CD includes melodies and imaginative arrangements of traditional Breton marches and dances such as the gavotte, laridé or schottische..

Skilda. *Spas*. L’OZ Production.

This group performs compositions with an electric beat and carefully crafted mesmerizing melodies. Konan Mével plays flutes and pipes, Aidan O’Rourke and Loumi Seveno play fiddles, and the CD includes the voice of Kohann. A DVD accompanies the CD.

DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL 18 – THE ANKOU AND THE KORRIGAN (a Breton legend for techno times)

Jean Pierre Le Mat

The night air was mild and clear. It was the period of full moon, that the Bretons call "Kann al loar". It means "moon splendour" and also, strangely enough, "moon struggle". The animals were resting, their face turned towards the celestial disc. Remote ancestors were haunting their sleep. The people of Brittany were curled up in their beds. Deep in their skull, the moon glow germinated flowers of memory. At the fringes of their dreams they felt the splendour and the struggle of the moon.



The Ankou had appeared on a lonely forest road, darkened by the shades of the trees. In the village of Paimpont, he collected the remains of an old scientist. Then he crossed the borough of Néant. He seized the corpse of a poor peasant. The moans of the widow could be heard between the walls of the sheds; the Ankou was already faraway. His road was marked out by the sweat of the last breaths and the rancid smell of regrets.

Throughout the year he travels on the roads of Brittany, tearing off suffering bodies from the living world. The Bretons whisper that the Ankou is the ghost of the first dead man of the year. During twelve months, he is, in our country, the servant of Death. He wandered on the roads of Brittany, piling up the invisible remains of the dead in his cart.

He was then moving along the Butte-aux-Tombes, not far from Pertuis-Néanti. The cart, weighed down by its funeral loading, was shaking about behind a ghostly black horse. The

dry grass shivered at the foot of burned fir trees. The branchless trunks looked like spectra. The ground was awaiting dew. In this landscape irradiated by moonlight, the Ankou felt vaguely dismal. There was in the Broceliande forest a kind of supernatural challenge for him. The Ankou was taking part in the natural rhythms, and that situation comforted him, as far as the Death servant can be comforted. But the magic of the place was a divine provocation, a reproach of the Creator against his most frightening creature, and his most useful one. Yes, his most useful... Thanks to Death, the divine work of creation can be eternal.

The Ankou ruminated these dark thoughts while travelling, his skeletal hand on the back of his ghostly horse. He did not immediately see a small light capering in front of him, from one edge of the road to the other. When he was close to the moving gleam, the Ankou noticed the wonder: a Breton goblin, a korrigan, was sitting just there, among the heather.

The Death servant stopped his cart. He was not really in a hurry, and he was very interested. He never saw a korrigan so closely. He knew that he would never transport such a creature in his cart, because the korrigans can disappear without dying. In front of him was his equal, but also his enemy: Light in front of darkness, unpredictable in front of inevitable ...

"What is a korrigan doing on my way?" creaked the creepy creature.

"I only wanted to see you," answered the goblin.

He then began to perform ludicrous grimaces, and carried out some acrobatics. It should be said that, in spite of his aspect of a bearded old man, the korrigan is an extremely nimble creature. His acrobatic abilities are amazing, and the Ankou was disconcerted by the performance of the little being.

"Stop!" The Ankou said angrily. "Can you believe you are a smart fellow, playing foolishly, jumping stupidly, without measuring the consequences?"

"Ah Ah Ah Ah! Mevel braz, you like to surprise, but you do not like to be surprised! You are proud of your own rigour! You think that you control the game, don't you? You believe you are

a master? You are a fool, Ankou! You do not know what life is. Life is a sparkling flame, and you collect only ashes. You can switch off candles, but you will never catch the light and the heat they transmitted."

"Enough with your philosophical triviality! Explain to me, fair mouth, why I cannot catch any being of your breed. Everything that has life must die!"

"Easy to explain. The korrigan's nature is the same as light. Nothing remains when and end is put to us. That is why you could never catch us. That is why, also, people see us only in darkness."

"Are you superior beings compared to mankind?"

"Not really. We are not above them. The people of humankind are sources of light. That is why they are much more complicated than we are. When their light is put out, it remains ashes and pieces of machinery. You catch these remains, Ankou, but not the energy which made them move and shine and exist."



The Ankou did not worry for a while about the korrigan. He turned towards the remains which were laying in his wagon. He stroked absent-mindedly the emaciated back of his horse. Then he started to speak slowly to himself:

"I felt that the remains of the small scientist were much heavier than those of the farmer. That looks strange, but it is true that..."

When some complex thing gets out of order, it leaves many pieces in good state. It is the same with the living beings. It is very rare that, like a diamond thrown in fire, a man is entirely consumed and leaves nothing behind him when

he dies. There is no odour of corpse, and it is said that such a man died in odour of sanctity...

"What about the saints, Korrigan? Ah Ah Ah!!! These primitive beings, without any complexity!!! Too naive, too simple, too excessive, a shame for the human society. Errors of nature!"

"Okay, they are exceptions. The civilized beings cannot imagine that life may exist without fading on these distressing and delicious questions which are the salt and the waste of their existence."

"The saints will not help you, Korrigan! Their example is not convincing. If you want to challenge me, you must find something else. I am the true representative of the natural laws, and you must yield this point to me. Life follows laws that the men codified in their biological science. If you belong to the community of living beings, then you must also belong to those who obey the laws of biology."

"Yes, yes, schoolmaster! ... I know your laws. But I also know that each day, each minute, each second, they are transgressed. Thousands, millions of unforeseen mutations are carried out around us, in flower's pistils, in animal's glands, in quiet seeds. Everywhere, defrauders and smugglers are diverting the laws of the life, for the greatest glory of life itself. A gene, motionless until now, jumps suddenly. A chromosome opens, closes and changes. Why these mischiefs? Probably it is in the nature of the alive things to be mischievous, for good or bad reasons, and often without any reason at all. Your own law is challenged, Ankou! In their boxes and their containers, the scientists cultivate living cells that multiply indefinitely without dying nor aging, without even being tired. They are said to be immortal. Where is your power? What is doing your policing?"

"You are crafty, you microbe. But you will not escape my rigor. Okay, you can caper in the biology fields. But you live also in a physical world, made up with atoms and molecules. Will you be able to escape the laws governing the matter? No! You have to yield with the properties of the elements which compose your body, the atoms of your den, the molecules of the ground underneath your steps."

"You are out of date, Ankou. The physicists do not any longer explain the behaviour of gases, solids or liquids by iron laws, but by sums of probabilities. The more their knowledge advances, and the more they are careful. Today, they consider the fundamental equations of thermodynamics as approximations, true when the pressure is weak. And what about pranks of the atoms, frenzies of the photons and gags of the neutrinos! In the least atom, the nice electrons are so unforeseeable that the physicists have given up. They drew up the report of the atomic freedom in what is called the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. Do you think, Ankou, that I would be clumsy enough, and unable to hide among all these uncertainties?"

The Ankou felt that the least logical fault allowed improbable beings as goblins, elves, leprechauns, fairies, ghosts or trolls to infiltrate the real-world. He was the great protector of this world. He maintained the wheels of this imposing machine by his ceaseless labour. All the living beings believed in him. He is the ultimate reality. He must preserve the kingdom of reality against the improbable beings.

"You are pleased to divert the laws," he shouted furiously. "Try to cross the wall of mathematics. Two plus two equals four. Break your nose on that. You will not pass. Even if you move away from my equality, I will get you back in my claws."

"Oh!" said the goblin mockingly, "if I want to dance a jig on the wall of mathematics, I would not try to challenge your commonplace operations! I would check if these walls are as solid and hermetic as you believe. I could begin with some odd phenomena, like the imaginary numbers. But it is true that, after a while, your logical chain would catch me. Do you know theorem VI of Gödel?"

????

Closing his eyes, the Goblin recited:

"For every ω -consistent recursive class κ of formulas there are recursive class signs r , such that neither $v \text{ Gen } r$ nor $\text{Neg}(v \text{ Gen } r)$ belongs to $\text{Flg}(\kappa)$ (where v is the free variable of r)"

"What means this nonsense?" muttered the Ankou.

The face of the goblin was illuminated by a broad smile. His eyes sparkled.

"Okay, the language of Kurt Gödel is rather obscure. Some people said in another way: 'For any consistent formal, computably enumerable theory that proves basic arithmetical truths, an arithmetical statement that is true, but not provable in the theory, can be constructed.' In mathematics, there are propositions that are true, but impossible to be proved. They are undecidable. Just like there exist undecidable propositions in mathematics, there exist undecidable beings in the living world. I am part of them. I wander in the Breton moor, flouting your biological laws and your armies of theorems."

"You manage to find spaces of freedom everywhere," cursed the Ankou. "But you remain nevertheless in my universe. And you will stay in that place!"

"Easy, easy, great dictator! You over-estimate the dictatorship principles. However, you must know that the universes overlap and penetrate one another. The symphony of the spheres is at the crossroad between music and geometry. The diseases stayed in a territory shared by biology and chemistry. I know how to pass from theology to mathematics, from economics to politics, from..."

The goblin disappeared without finishing his sentence. The Ankou raised his shoulders. At the same instant, in a pub of Paimpont, a poet began to compose a song, and a girl felt her heart beating with love.



Sant Erwan, Patron Saint of Brittany, celebrated in May

A Traveler's Account from 1920: *The Spell of Brittany* by Ange M. Mosher
(New York: Duffield and Company, 1920)

Chapter XIV – The Legend and Pardon of St. Yves

Paul Sebillot, in his collections of legends of Brittany, gives a popular legend of St. Yves. According to this St. Yves dies and appears at the gate of Paradise. St. Peter, in answer to his knocking, calls out: "Who's there?" And what do you want?" St. Yves replies with impressive dignity: "When one knocks at a door it is naturally to enter." St. Peter grumbles: "Everybody can't come in here as if it were a wine shop; what did you do down there during your life?" "I was a lawyer," replies St. Yves. "A lawyer!" says St. Peter, 'you have mistaken the door, go and knock at the other place.' And he prudently turns the key twice instead of the usual once. St. Yves, disconcerted, was standing outside when, as luck had it, there arrive a sweet little nun who had died that day at Tréguier, to whom he tells his unlucky adventure. "It can't be possible," says the nun. "St. Peter couldn't shut the door of Paradise to such as you. Let us see." And she knocks softly at the door. She is, of course, promptly received and St. Yves with her. And the legend goes on to relate how he tried to get a seat among the clergy but the benches were already crowded, the more so as the profession was inclined to stoutness. He was forced to go down to the seats reserved for lawyers, which he finds quite empty. Meanwhile the little nun has difficulty in finding a place among her sisterhood, and upon a nod from St. Yves she comes over and sits with her much-honored friend from Tréguier. The legend shows that the two became so talkative as to disturb the quiet of the place somewhat, and the archangel charged with police duty in Paradise, comes over to restore quiet, even threatening to turn the lawyer out of the place. But St. Yves reminds him that first, he has possession, and second, he has definite property rights, and he quotes from the Code. The archangel goes off for a bailiff. Of

course no such person is to be found in Paradise, and St. Yves is permitted to hold his place. This legend originated in Morbihan, a Department of Brittany always jealous of Tréguier and the glory of her saint, and also possessing intense hatred of the bailiffs of the Government both of which sentiments we note in the legend.

We shall find that our Brittany is a Province of Saints and each saint has his miraculous fountain. When these are sought for healing of disease, coins and other objects are thrown into the fountain. That these were long ago thus frequented is proven by the fact that in digging deep beneath them, pieces of coin and amulets of ancient epochs have been found. But in place of the Roman divinity a Christian saint now presides over and gives the name to the fountain. Each saint cures some special disease. It is well understood that St. Pabu cures rheumatism, St. Cadoc deafness, and St. Kirion makes a specialty of boils – "father of boils," a popular litany has it. For dropsy one must seek the aid of St. Onene, St. Ivy must be invoked for colic, St. Urlou for gout and St. Trémeur is a specific for neuralgia. How any medical doctor makes a living in Brittany with such distinguished competition is a cause for wonder. Nor are animals without protecting saints. St. Eloi, St. Hervé and St. Gildas are committed in the Breton liturgy to horses. Cows and horned cattle share the spiritual advantages of various saints, St. Herbot being prominent in the long list. At their fêtes troops of these excellent beasts march in procession. St. Cornély is, however, most to be trusted as respects horned cattle, and the great fête of this saint is held at Carnac on the fifteenth of September. At fêtes of horses bunches of hair are pulled from the manes and tails of the animals are placed on the altar rail as offerings, while at the shires of St. Herbot, patron saint of the cow, pats of butter are offered. This is the saint invoked by the Breton dairymaid if the butter is slow in forming in the churn.

St. Yves has no fountain of miraculous water whereby to afford assistance in cases of distress. He descends to no such earthly shire. The Lawyer Saint pleads the cause of the widow and orphan and of others who suffer from injustice within the gates of that Paradise which at the start threatened to exclude him from its courts.

Only in a single emergency is St. Yves invoked through the medium of his statue. There is a strange and lugubrious custom with the Breton, gradually falling into disuse, called the "adjuration of St. Yves." In the case of serious quarrel; if a Breton suffers from dishonesty of another; if a boundary line has been tampered with and no proof was available, he had only to invoke St. Yves, whose thirst for justice after the six hundred years since his death, is in no wise abated. The wronged person made a pilgrimage to some statue of the saint and, first, placing a few coins in the auriolate of the saint, demanded justice of him, sometimes in rather stern language, sometimes in serious caress, going to the length of shaking the wooden image by a shoulder. Many times these words were uttered: "If the right is on his side condemn us; if on our side condemn him; cause him to die within a year." Then the circuit of the chapel is made three times and he kneels before the entrance and makes a last supplication and it is finished. The guilty person dies within the year and justice is accomplished!

Thus the Lawyer Saint holds high authority with the Breton, with whom the wall which separates the visible from the invisible is very slight. It has been said in fact that the Breton is generally in a state of mind in which an explanation of natural events is an interpretation of the miraculous.

Of course many legends have gathered about the name of the Lawyer Saint. M. Anatole Le Braz, in his book "*Au Pays des Pardons*," has given the preceding and the two following legends, parts of which I give in his own words. For instance: his boundless hospitality at the manor house, Kermartin, is illustrated in the following: "A troupe of jugglers arrived in the middle of the night. St. Yves, after a busy day devoted to

professional duties, was in the midst of his best sleep. But, awakened by the knocking, he rose, welcomed and fed the guests, serving them with his own hands. After a generous feast of pork, beef and bread had been enjoyed the chief of the Nomad tribe felt called upon to express his gratitude and to explain the several callings of the members of his family; speaking of himself as not only a juggler but a rhymist of war songs and the Lives of the Saints; then introducing his wife, player on the viol and fortune-teller, and with a knowledge of herbs and a talent for curing diseases by prayer; followed by mention of the two sons, one gifted in playing the bagpipes, the other the flute. The juggler was proceeding to describe the accomplishments of a group of young daughters when St. Yves begged him to spare himself the pains of making further introductions, assuring them that his house was theirs for so long a time as it should please them to remain. Eleven years after, at the time of the death of St. Yves, they were still his guests."

This legend is sculptured on the pulpit of the Cathedral of Tréguier.

The third legend illustrates the hospitality of the Lawyer Saint who never sent a beggar from his door unsatisfied. The legend has it that on one especially stormy night, the cook of the manor house, believing that no one could possibly turn up to ask for food, prepared a limited supply of soup. Contrary to her expectations, crowds of hungry people poured into the old kitchen. The cook was frightened. But St. Yves calmed her fears, and then occurred what in the records of the Life of St. Yves is named: "The Miracle of the Soup," for as fast as the cook ladled out the contents of the kettle, the quantity was made good by miraculous means. Also the loaves of bread were replenished in the same mysterious manner. The ceremony of the "Giving of the Soup," which forms a part of the fête of St. Yves, celebrates this legend.

We must not leave Tréguier without mention of the great fête devoted to St. Yves. Not only is he the greatest saint in the Breton calendar, but his fame extended to Rome, where in the fourteenth century a church was built, dedicated to him, and

altars in his honor were consecrated in various cathedrals in France. Rubens painted a picture of the illustrious Breton and a fresco in Italy shows our Lawyer Saint in the act of giving gratuitous advice to a clientele in rags. His Fête occurs on the nineteenth day of May, but one should make a point of arriving in Tréguier on the eighteenth in order to make the pilgrimage to Kermartin to witness the ceremony of the "Giving of the Soup."

We arrive at the manor house, having become attached to a procession of halt, blind and crippled beggars, all making their way to the famous kitchen of the hospitable advocate who was once master there.

The scene is curious and impressive. In the large fireplace, over blazing fagots, several immense kettles are suspended. All about the large kitchen the mendicants are sitting, some on the long benches which line the walls, some on low seats, placed here and there. At a large table a woman gives to each newly-arrived a porringer and spoon. Into each breaks bread, of which we note great piles at one end of the table, then bringing the porringer to the fireplace, the woman in charge of the kettles ladles the soup into the porringer of each applicant, who returns to his seat. Each on makes the sign of the cross before commencing his repast, and only the soft clicking of the wooden spoons against the faïence porringers is audible. This coming in of the hungry and the departure of the satisfied are accomplished silently and the soup-giving continues until midnight, when the little church close by fills with the motley crowd, who watch and pray until daybreak, when the mass is said, and for them the "Pardon of St. Yves" is ended, save that during the great procession of the following day – the real fête day – these beggars lined the route by which the procession passed, their plaintive songs filling the air and resembling in the distance the droning of bees. During the procession they receive alms from the moving mass. Nowhere as at the fête of St. Yves are the beggars so numerous. For was not St. Yves the protector of the poor? M. Anatole Le Braz has properly named the fête of St. Yves: "The Pardon of the Poor."

I recall a perfect nineteenth of May when we made an important pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Yves. It was the six hundredth anniversary of the death of the Lawyer Saint. At eight o'clock in the morning all the bells of Tréguier were pealing, every house was decorated, as were the streets, with banners, flowers and streamers – the color of St. Yves (yellow) prevailing. From every direction neighboring parishioners arriving. Each procession advanced, singing with canticle of St. Yves set to the music of an ancient Breton Battle Hymn. The clergy of Tréguier went to meet each procession and the curious salutation of the banners took place, after which all passed to the Cathedral, where, after short devotions at the tomb of the saint, brilliant with lighted candles and gorgeous flowers, each parish was in turn assigned its place in the great procession being massed on the public square. Over twenty parishes poured into Tréguier that day and many thousands of pilgrims besides from all over Brittany.

The great procession always makes the pilgrimage to Kermartin, two miles from Tréguier, where are the tomb and the manor house of the Saint. The latter is still standing and some of the furniture remains. The tomb is in the little churchyard of Minihiy close by. In the church one sees inscribed on the walls the last will and testament of Yves Hélotry; in the sacristy are reassured the remains of this breviary. Although the body of St. Yves reposes at Minihiy, his skull is enshrined in a gold casket in the tomb in the Cathedral at Tréguier. This is always borne with great pomp in the procession on the day of the fête. But the actual tomb at Minihiy is a small arcade under which the faithful pass, kneeling, in fact creeping, so low is the stone placed. Unless one performs this little ceremony one may not lay claim to being truly "bretonnante."

By nine o'clock the great procession begins to move from Tréguier, the bells incessantly ringing, military bands playing, choristers and people singing, and always and only the one Cantic – the Cantic of St. Yves – of which the refrain is, in the Breton language:

*N'hen es ket en Breiz, n'hen es ket unan.
N'hen es ket eur Zant evel Sant Erwan.*

Which put into French:

*Il n'y a pas en Bretagne, il n'y a pas un
Il n'y a pas un Saint comme St. Yves.*

The priest of each parish in turn sings a stanza, the choristers and choirs, bands and people take up the refrain.

The procession, two miles long, with its hundreds of gay banners, the rich vestments of the clergy, the scarlet and white of the choristers, the gay fête costumes of the peasants, all flashing in the sunshine under the bluest of skies, as it goes winding through the fields, gives, in its ensemble, the impression of a gorgeous silken scarf tossed across the green meadows inn endless length of prismatic color. And always and always that refrain, sung in march rhythm, each pilgrim keeping time in his step and with his staff repeats the familiar refrain:

“N'hen es ket en Breiz. N'hen es ket unan. »

Arrived at Minihy mass is said in the open air and the procession passing under the arcade of the tomb returns to Tréguier, disperses for the midday repast, and the afternoon is passed among the booths erected in the public square and in sports of various kinds.

Such is the Pardon of St. Yves, a Saint in all ways worthy of the great Profession of which he is Patron.



Celebrating Sant Erwan in New York City

In recent years the annual celebration of St. Yves has taken on a life of its own as Breton communities throughout the world have used this day to affirm their identity. After all, the Irish have St. Patrick's Day. Why not a day for the Bretons, too.

BZH New York is a young organization of Bretons in New York City (and surrounding area) who have an active schedule of events throughout the year. For Gouel Sant Erwan they put together a weekend of events. On Friday night a fest noz was held at Connolly's pub on Times Square. This was much more than a fest-noz since it also included a concert by Ag Ar Choéj Quintet from Brittany (see below) as well as a concert by Touareg musicians and a Nigerian band. Ag Ar Choéj Quintet also performed in concert on Saturday, May 17th in Astoria, and then again on Monday the 18th at the Shrine in Harlem. On Sunday May 18th Brittany's love for bicycle racing was celebrated in partnership with the Five Borough Bicycle Club. Riders could go for 145, 100 or 65 miles to arrive in Montauk, Long island to help sponsor the Montauk Century 2008 Bike Tour. At the finish line BZH NY had a stand and musicians were also there to celebrate the finish.

Ag Ar Choéj Quintet

This is a group of five musicians from the Vannetais area – several of whom came to New York and Philadelphia with the Kevrenn Alre in March 2007. Playing as a group or in pairs or trios, the group includes: Fabrice Lothodé (biniou koz and bombarde), Chim Cadoudal (biniou braz - Scottish style bagpipes), Bruno Le Berre (song and biniou braz), Samuel Le Hénanff (song and button accordion), and Tangi Saout (bombardes).

For more about BZH New York, visit their website: www.bzh-ny.org

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

The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 240,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

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

What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed in 35 of the 51 States of the U.S. -- from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between—we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 25 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. In November 2006 we published our 100th issue.

In the 3,000+ pages of **Bro Nevez** produced so far, over 800 books from Brittany have been reviewed or noted, and over 300 Breton music recordings have been reviewed and an additional 550 new releases briefly described.

The U.S. ICDBL Web Site: www.icdbl.org

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

Other Action

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. We have had an annual information booth at the Potomac Celtic Festival (Washington D.C. area) since 1994. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

More direct support for the Breton language ...

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan – Breton language immersions schools – for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Member. We have maintained a personal link with the children on one particular Diwan school – Skol Diwan Landerne – since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school’s “godmother.”

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

PLEASE JOIN US. YOUR SUPPORT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

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

Lois Kuter
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