

BRO NEVEZ

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

FEST NOZ - 1970s

Le Télégramme, June 25, 1975

LE FOLGOËT

Fest noz 1^{er} 58

Samedi prochain, à 21 h., aura lieu à l'école des Frères au Folgoët le fest noz de la section des Chevalliers Notre-Dame. Il sera animé par les Sonnerien Du, les Kannerien Kastellin et des sonneurs de la région.

Le Télégramme, Aug. 25-26, 1975

Carnet des festou noz

Samedi

LANGOLEN. - Soirée crêpes et fest-noz à l'école Saint-Augustin animée par les frères Briand et les chanteurs locaux.

PLOUGUERNEAU. - Au Grouane (Diouris), fest-noz avec les groupes Aderien, Levenez et Tan-ha-Kurun.

HUELGOAT. - Fest-noz gratuit à Coat-Mocum organisé par le comité Diwan. Avec Marchand Kerjean, Le Roux, Dilasser, Crépillon, Thomas et Kedoucuff.

POULLAOUËN. - Fest-noz du comité du quartier Saint-Victor, salle des fêtes, avec les sœurs Lozac'h et les sonneurs Kermorvan.

SPEZET. - Le centre de vacances bretonnant organisée à partir de 21 h, salle municipale, route de Gourin, un fest-noz animé par tous les chanteurs et sonneurs de la région.

BAYE. - Fête du Loquilec, et fest-noz avec les chanteurs A. Péron et Anne-Marie Colomer, les sonneurs Gwen-ar-Breiz de Quimper et le groupe Lonkerien-Dour de Carhaix.

BOURBRIAC. - Fest-noz

des anciens d'A.F.N. au manoir de « Mery-Langoat ».

ALLINEUC. - Fest-noz de l'amicale laïque dans la cour de l'école privée.

TREMEVEN. - Fest-noz avec « Sonerien-Du », à partir de 21 h.

LANRIVAIN. - A Toulgoulic, fest-noz avec les frères Morvan.

LOGUIVY-PLUGRAS. - Fest-noz avec les « Boutrikked-ar-Menez ».

LANMEUR. - Fest noz du comité des fêtes au Foyer des jeunes.

Dimanche

PLÉUC-SUR-LIE. - Fest-noz animé par « La mirlitantouille » et la harpiste « Soazig ».

SAINTE-SERVAIS (22). - Fest-noz du foyer Anatole Le Braz de Callac.

PLOUGUERNEAU. - Au Grouane (Diouris), à 15 h, spectacle breton avec Gouellia, Ar-vro-Bagan et Kristen Nogues.

PLOUÏE. - Fest noz du pardon, salle Cochenec, à 21 h.

PLOGOFF. - Fest noz gratuit, place de la Mairie.

Le Télégramme, March 24, 1979

Festou noz

SCRIGNAC. - Ce soir, fest noz du club de lutte bretonne, à 20 h 30, à l'école.

COLLOREC. - Ce soir, bal costumé organisé par l'école, à la salle Hourmant.

GUIPAVAS. - Gouel braz Kervoco, organisé par l'association Ty-Lann-Vihan. Au programme : à 15 h, Fil and Co (folk irlandais); 16 h, Abanico (musique des Andes); 17 h, théâtre en breton par la troupe Ar Vro Bagan, « Meurlaje »; 18 h, Storlok (rock et blues breton); 19 h, petit repas et fest noz.

NAIZIN. - Soir, à Naizin organisé par on interve- nophes natu- rmediaires

FEST NOZ - 2006

Armor Magazine, January 2006

Festou noz

7 janvier - Le Haut-Corlay (22) avec Sonerien Du - Tonquédec (22) avec Breudeur Morvan, Penn Kaled - Billé (35) avec Kellen, Zic Plein d'Air, F & D Guichard - Carquefou (44) avec Follenn, Kas Barh - Plouay (56) avec Kaerell, Korn Toull - Rieux (56) avec Ar Men Du, Penn Bihan, Alain Pennec, Keman

8 - Gouézec (29) avec Avel ar Brug, Germain & Vonnette

14 - Orvault (44) avec Jean-Michel Veillon/Jacky Molard, Yudal Combo, les frères Bardoul - Quimperlé (29) avec Loened Fall et Korn Toul - Plémet (22) avec Ravageous, Trio Jam - Quimper-Guézennec (22) avec An Trot, War Rog, Launay/Savidan, Le Louarn/Thomas, Serge/Thierry - Pleyben (29) avec Kerzh'Ta, Tan Dei - Plougastel-Daoulas (29) avec Skolvan, Rivoalen/Flatres, Soubigou/Guédès, Bec'h Dehi - Guichen (35) avec Trio Bivoac, Termen, Florez/Royer - Guénin (56) avec Sonerien Du

15 - St-Brieuc (22) I.n. - L'Hermitage (35) avec Tarsal, Les Beluettes - La Chapelle-sur-Erdre (44) avec Toull Karr, Kellen - Pornic (44) avec Gwalig, Jad'hisse, Les Pascaux - Belz (56) avec A Stroll Kozh Yaouank

19 - Bernée (56) avec JC Tréguier

21 - Quimperlé (29) avec Suignard/Talec, Carrère Habask/Chapalain, Bébort Landrain - Bourbric (22) avec Stourm - Kéren (22) avec Sonerien Du - Plumaugat (22) avec Sterne, Duo d'en Bas, Les Chantouses de Kerho - Brest (29) avec Meltan, Kanerien Langazel, Yaouanc/Javouhey - Landerneau (29) avec Breizh Brothers, Malian, Keffiou - Pleyber-Christ (29) avec Tud, Sonerien an Aod, Kanerien St-Tegoned - Amanlis (35) avec Tudansti, sonneurs et chanteurs de la Rimandelle - Corps-Nuds (35) avec Yac'hus, Pierre & Mari Seven, Bagad Kadoudal - Goven (35) avec Penn Treuz, Obay, Img, Touked Mod Koz, Le Loupp/Max - Sucé-sur-Erdre (44) avec Talar, Courants d'Air, Mer/Geoffroy - Loccal-Mendon (56) avec Hamon/Martin Quintet, David Pasquet

Group, Penn Gwenn, Bagad Plunered - St-Vincent-sur-Oust (56) avec Koskerien, Dans Teurjou

22 - Le Trévoux (29) f.d. avec Deredel/Le Guern, Habask/Chapalain/Bébort, Landrain, Carrère/Touch'Yav - Sucé-sur-Erdre (44) avec JL Revault - Bréhan (56) avec Avel Dro, Beurhan - Kervignac (56) avec Penn Bihan, Enora et JC Tréguier

27 - St-Nazaire (44) avec Carré Manchot, David Pasquet Group

28 - Plonéour-Lanvern (29) avec Alain Pennec, Ronan Robert, Bivoac, Jean-Yves et Patrick Bardoul ... - Plédran (22) avec V'Iacor, Kasadenn, Yann Dour, Les Badodous - Guiclan (29) avec Breizh Brothers, Carton Rouge, Kanerien St-Tegoned - Le Relecq-Kerhuon (29) avec Klaskerien, Kanerien Langazel, Tor-kad - Bruz (35) avec Termen/Mesk ha Mesk/Ja Breizh - Facc (35) avec Carré Manchot, Colleuc/Garreau, Sonneurs de la Rassemblée - Pleurtuit (35) avec Daniel & Françoise Guichard, Kendirvi, Kemm P'tits Cailloux Bleus - Ploerdut (56) avec Loened Fall - Elven (56) avec Duo Yves Le Guennec, Dans Teurjou - Hennebont (56) avec Ruzerion Traouere, An Didoenn, Trio Guével - Ploeren (56) avec Ar Men Du, Follenn, Warzao

29 - St-Renan (29) avec Tri Horn, Planchon/Labasque - Parthenay-de-Bretagne (35) avec Yac'hus, Yann & Kaou - Guégon (56) avec JC & Enora Tréguier

4 février - Quéven (56) avec Darhaou, Louise Ebré et Ifig Troadec... - Pabu Stourm - Vern-sur-Seiche (35) avec Kendirvi - Couëron (44) avec Kellen, Mr Talar & ses binioues, Crussion/Gouedranche, Girault/Guillard - Muzillac (56) avec Chilaouet, Spontus, Pevard Den

5 - Plérian (22) avec Kastelodenn, Menguy/Guéguen, Sonerien ar Goued - Berric (56) avec Dans Teurjou

Retrouvez la liste complète des festou noz sur www.fest-noz.net

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 97

February 2006

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

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

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

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ON THE COVER ... you will find listings of festoù-noz, Breton dances, from two different decades - copies of some newspaper clippings I collected in Brittany in the 1970s and a listing posted just this January in the magazine Armor. In the 70s newspaper listings were key in locating a fest-noz. Today things are much easier for dancers with news in a number of magazines as well as on websites. You can get a real flavor for Breton dance bands of the 1970s, 80s and 90s who performed and still perform at festoù noz on the new CD, La Musique bretonne – Les groupes à danser, reviewed in this issue.

FROM THE EDITOR - The February issue of Bro Nevez in March

This issue comes to you a bit later than usual because it took longer than usual to get all the piece assembled. It's as simple as that. And there are additional articles, CD and book reviews that will need to wait until the May issue since we just simply ran out of space (as well as time!).

The U.S. ICDBL has the mission to support the Breton language, so some readers may wonder why so much of this issue is devoted to Breton music. Whether you like rock or jazz, classical symphonic compositions, or music with a world beat, Brittany is a paradise for music lovers. Breton singers and musicians are proud to pass along a heritage of melodies and dances unique to Brittany, but they are also very much at home in an exploration of many styles of music from all over the world. It is clear that music is one of many media important for the future of the Breton language as young performers choose to express themselves this language with new interpretations of older ballads as well as in the composition of new texts.

« Bilingualism is not a deviance » by Xavier Molénat

From: *Sciences humaines* # 161 (June 2005)

Translated by Pierre Mens

Handed in October 2004 to the (*then*) "Ministre de l'intérieur" Dominique de Villepin, the Bénisti report (named after the President of the Prevention commission of the parliamentary study group on interior security, who wrote it) has caused many reactions, especially among professionals of social work.

Formulating a number of proposals that would improve the prevention of delinquency "from the very first signs of deviance, that is to say from the youngest age", it recommends in particular, for foreign children aged 1 to 3, that their mother restricts herself "to speak French at home so that the children get used to having that single language to express themselves".

It is in fact outlined elsewhere that fathers "often require that the local patois of their country be spoken at home" (...).

Between 4 and 6, these same children, when having difficulties with the French language, should be, according to another proposal of the report, taken in charge by a speech therapist so that "the child immediately recovers expression and language means indispensable for their school and social evolution".

In an open letter to the "Ministre de l'intérieur" dated February 9, 2005, a group of linguists of the "Center of research and educational applications in languages" (CRAPEL, Nancy 2 University) expressed their concern that such "imbecilities" could find a place in an official publication.

The letter also emphasized that "there is no scientific base to say that there is a link between early bilingualism and delinquency".

Outlining that "bilingualism is not a speech pathology that would require a speech therapy", they deem that "forbidding these parents to speak to their children is not only a totalitarian intrusion and an attack of their human rights, but also a very efficient way to undermine the quality and the amount of communication between generations (a real factor of delinquency ?).

In addition, it would create another form of discrimination, bilingualism being refused to families having "difficulties" but not to the others.

Quoting recent works, these linguists outline, on the other hand, the numerous advantages of bilingualism: increased communication empathy, access to varied resources, superior abstraction capacity...

In a word, the bilingual child deserves, according to them, "an appropriate education rather than a linguistic policy based on sheer ignorance and designed within the frame of a repressive law".

Open letter to Mr Dominique de Villepin, on the website of the CRAPEL:

www.univ-nancy2.fr/CRAPEL/news_lettre_ouverte.htm

Bénisti report :

[www.jabenisti.com/IMG/pdf/rapport_preliminaire_version_def .pdf](http://www.jabenisti.com/IMG/pdf/rapport_preliminaire_version_def.pdf)

France to Celebrate Francophonie

A press release dated January 19, 2006 on the AgenceBretagnepresse.com website noted that France is planning a major celebration of French speaking peoples throughout the world with a festival called "Francoffonies!". The three "f"s stand for "Festival Francophone en France."

Over 2000 artists, sculptors, writers, and intellectuals and performers from 63 countries will participate in some 500 events. Quebec will have very strong presence in festival events.

The unveiling of this project included three National Ministers of France – those of Culture, Education and Francophonie – as well as the General Secretary of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Abdou Diouf. The press release noted that French is the ninth most used language in the world, with 175 million speakers. It is the maternal language for 110 million of these.

So France is preparing to put considerable energy into celebrating the world-wide presence of the French language, while it still refuses to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority

Languages which would give a minimum of protection to non-French languages within France. It appears that, as the French Constitution states: "French is THE language of the Republic." And it appears that France is willing to spend millions of euros to promote world francophonism while continuing to do its best to limit resources as much as possible for bilingual and immersion language programs which allow native non-French languages of France like Breton to flourish along side French.

Yes to Breton Campaign Still Growing

The "Ya d'ar Brezhoneg" campaign by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg continues to assist and encourage organizations, businesses and towns to make Breton more publicly visible and used. This past fall seven new towns signed on to the campaign Le Relecq Kerhuon, Le Juch, Douarnenez, Lesneven, Plougonvelin, Saint-Martin-les-Champs, and Tréouergat. They joined sixteen other towns already at work on specific projects to expand the use of Breton.

In October 2005 "Carhaix Golf" – a golf club in the town of Carhaix in central western Brittany – became the 575th business or organization to sign onto the campaign. They will install bilingual Breton/French signs in this brand new club and on the golf course. This step is considered quite normal by the director of Carhaix Golf, Claude Prigent, who regrets that although he can understand Breton, he never learned to speak it since it was never offered as part of his schooling in the 1950s.

Prizes for Breton Language Creativity

France 3 Ouest - Prizioù 2005

For nine years the TV station France 3 Ouest has awarded prizes for the use of the Breton language in various media. Here are the winners for 2005:

Herve ar Beg, for best radio broadcasts. Recognized were his programs for Arvorig FM on the people of the Mururoa atoll in French Polynesia. France began atmospheric nuclear testing in this colony in 1966 because Algeria had ceased being a nuclear test site option when they

gained independence in 1962. France has conducted 41 atmospheric tests and 138 underground tests from 1966 to 1992 resuming in 1995 despite international protest to complete six more tests.

Marianna Donnart and **Moran Dipode** for best book for youth with their heroic fantasy *Brezel an Erevent*, published by Keit Vimp Beo. As noted in a little later in this issue of Bro Nevez they also won first prize in the Prizioù ar Yaouankiz competition for new Breton language novels for youth.

Ronan Hirrien for best film with his documentary called *Brezhoneg e 6 miz*, produced by Kalanna. This film follows adult students through six months of Breton language training with the organization Stumdi.

Ifig Troadeg for best book for *Carnets de route – Gwerzioù ha sonioù Bro-Dreger*, published by Dastum Bro-Dreger. (see note which follows in "New Music from Brittany").

Kanerion Pleuigner for best music recording for their CD *Cantiques et chants profanes*. This is a group of 25 men with an average age of 65 who interpret the rich traditional heritage of Vannetais Brittany. [Oddly enough, I could not find any reference to a CD of this title by this group in any publication I receive or in an internet search, but a double CD by them did come out in December – see short notes in "Heard of but not Heard" later in this issue.]

Yann-Fañch Jacq and his editorial team were given the "Priz Brezhoneger ar bloaz" for their creation of the weekly newspaper in Breton called *Ya!*.

And the Jury also gave it's prize to **Goulwena an Henaff** and **Riwal Kermareg** for their very popular television program for children called Mouchig-dall.

Prizioù ar Yaouankiz: Breton Lanugage Books for Teens

With the support of the General Council of Finistère and the Department of Youth and Sports, and the Regional Council of Brittany, a contest was launched for the second year for Breton language novels for youth.

Winners were announced this fall and a much needed new batch of books are now added to the offerings for teen readers of Breton, thanks to the publishing house Keit Vimp Beo. The contest is split into books for two age groups: 14 to 16 year olds and 11 to 13 year olds.

For the older teens the winning authors were **Marianna Donnart** and **Moran Dipode** with their 75-page book Brezel an Erevent (War of the dragons). This first novel by two Diwan high school students is a heroic fantasy set in a future world. Second prize was awarded to **Jakez-Erwan Mouton** for his 92-page novel Mignon d'ar sklaved, based on the slave trade. A finalist in this category also was **Gi Bideau's** Eil derez – a 60 page murder mystery involving the use of lots of mathematical formulas.

In the 11 to 13 year old category, the first prize winner was **Yann-Fañch Jacq** for his 62 page novel Goustadik war al lambig about the struggles of a 13 year old who believes her parents to be alcoholics. Second prize was awarded to **Stefan Charpentier** for his 62 page heroic fantasy, Ar voul strink, about the liberation of people caught in a crystal ball of a wizard. Other finalists in this category were **Yann-Fulup Dupuy** for his first novel, Penn ar veaj, a 63-page science fiction work, and **Mailou G-S**, for Tamallet, a 46 page thriller about the search for a murderer.

New Books in the Breton Language

Information for notes about these books was drawn from: *Armor* 429 (Oct. 2005), 430 (Nov. 2005), 431 (Dec. 2005) & 432 (Jan. 2006) / *Bremañ* 290 (kerzu 2005) & 291 (genver 2006) / *Al Liamm* 352 (here 2005) & 353 (kerzu 2005) / *Le Peuple Breton* 503 (Dec. 2005)

Ar Vro Bagan. Gwerzenn ar Vezhinerien. Embannadurioù Delioù. (Park Ijina Mekoad, 29800 Landerne)

This is a theater piece based on the book by Yvonne Pagniez (1896-1981), Pêcheur de Goémon. This new play by the Breton language theater Strollad ar Vro Bagan depicts the life of seaweed collectors on the northwestern coast of Brittany.

Cartulaire de Redon. L'AHID (Association des Amis des Archives Historiques du Diocèse de Rennes, 45 rue de Brest, 35042 Rennes cedex) The AHID published a facsimile of these Breton language documents from the 9th to 11th century in 1998, followed by a second volume in 2004. Both volumes – some 900 pages – are now available on CD ROM, including an index of names and places.

Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe. (Translated by Yeun ar Gow). Al Liamm. (www.alliamm.com) This book was first published by Al Liamm in 1964 under the title Abrobin. This classic tale of adventure by Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) was first written in 1718. The translation is by one of Brittany's great writers Yeun ar Gow (1897-1966).

Guy Etienne. Krennlavarioù nevez an ifern. Preder.

This includes nearly twenty years of poetry collected between 1986 and 2004 and translations of a selection of French, German, English and Slovak poets.

Francis Favereau. Ma breur. Skol Vreizh. 208 pp. (www.skolvreizh.com)

This is a novel about a man facing a quiet retirement who instead embarks on a quest to find his much younger half-brother Abdel.

Jaketa Favreau. Anna Vreizh (Translation by Mich Beyer). Embannadurioù Delioù.

This book on Anne of Brittany translated into Breton by Mich Beyer is easy to read and full of illustrations from the period to take the reader back in time to the 16th century.

John Graydd. Ne vo ket kig-ha-farz evit Samantha. TRES Embanner. 255 pp.

This is a police novel set in Brittany and written by Welshman John Graydd in Breton. It won the 2005 Priz Olier du Garzspenn.

Itsc'hak Katsenelson, Lamed Shapiro, Perets Markish. Kas ha laz. (Translated by Batia Baum and Koulizh Kedez). Skrid.

Translations from Yiddish of a short story and two poems on exile and death set in rebellions and pogroms of Russia.

Maguy Kerisit. Ameli-Penn-koumoul hag ar c'hampagn-kelaouiñ. TES (www.ac-rennes.fr/tes). 60 pp.

This is the first book for youth by an author who has contributed short stories to the journal *Al Liamm*. It is the winner of the prestigious Priz Langleiz for Breton language literature.

Mikael Madeg. Bale, n'eo ket dale ... Emban Kéredol.

Stories by this prolific author about the raising of his two children, Edern and Anna, born in India and raised in the Breton language.

Haroutioun Metchian. Steudad an Ankou. Hor Yezh. 173 pp.

Testimony on the extermination of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 told by a boy who lived through the nightmare.

Jean-Claude Miossec. Torfed ar chaseour.

Emgleo Breiz. 208 pp.

This is a translation of tales from Japan, India and Wales as well as a piece by Shakespeare.

Erik Orsenna. Enezenn al lavar. (Translation by Laorañs Motret) Ed. Preder (19 Park Maen Meur, 29700 Plomelin). 144 pp.

This is the tenth time Orsenna's book La grammaire est un chanson douce has been translated into another language – this time Breton.

Frank Roger. Omegalfa. (Translation by Stephane Carpentier) Skrid/Mouladurioù Hor Yezh.

Twelve short science fiction stories by Belgian author Frank Roger.

A FEW WEBSITES FOR BRETON LANGUAGE PUBLISHERS

(This is by no means a complete list, but some places to start if you are looking for Breton language books)

Al Liamm – www.alliamm.com

Emgleo Breiz – www.emgleobreiz.com

Mouladourioù Hor Yezh – www.yezh.com

Preder – www.preder.net

Skol Vreizh – www.skolvreizh.com

TES (Ti Embann ar Skolioù Brezhonek)

Publications for use in schools

www.ac-rennes.fr/tes

CELTIC LANGUAGE POETS IN NEW YORK CITY THIS MAY

City Lore, The Bowery Poetry Club, and the Graduate Center at CUNY present:

The 4th People's Poetry Gathering

Poetry is like a bird, it ignores all frontiers

~ Yevgeny Yevtushenko

From May 3rd to 7th, 2006, the *People's Poetry Gathering* - a poetry festival unlike any other, rooted in New York City's hybrid sounds, rhythms, and histories - bursts into life for the fourth time to invite New Yorkers to consider and celebrate the inestimable value of all languages and the artists who sculpt, sing, rant, dance and breathe the Realm of Words.

This year the *People's Poetry Gathering* takes as its theme--New York as the World-- as we highlight "Poetry from the World's Endangered and Contested Languages," with poets from every continent and feature "Harpsong: the Poetry and Music of the Celts" featuring poets, musicians, and scholars from the Breton, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Scots, and Welsh languages as well as the cultural contributions of the Celts and Celtic languages in the diaspora, such as the influence of Celtic writers on English poetry, Irish theater, and American vaudeville.

Featured artists include Gwyneth Lewis, Iwan Llwyd, and Robert Minhinnick (Wales), Matthew Fitt and Aonghas MacNeacail with Clíar (Scotland), Gearóid MacLochlainn and Jarlath Henderson (Ireland), and Paul Keineg (Brittany). The world's languages are complemented by programming in the city's languages including the commissioning of a collaborative New York City epic.

For more information please visit our website: www.peoplespoetry.org

[Editor's Note: work is underway to expand the Breton representation at the gathering so keep an eye on the website for more information]

Breton lesson 6 / Kentel 6

By Natalie Novik

Yezadur / Grammar

Mutations: an excellent table can be found on the web site that hosts the ICDBL, at www.breizh.net (in English). I suggest you copy it, and keep it at hand: the day you buy a Breton-English dictionary, it will come in particularly handy to find words, since the first letter may change in the body of a sentence. You can use that table to figure out what the original letter is in order to find the word in the dictionary. For example, if you look for “haz” in the dictionary, you won’t find it: it will be under “kaz”, cat. So knowing that **k** mutates into **h** is the key to finding the word.

Geriadurig / Vocabulary

Adjectives (they are always placed after the noun):

braz	big
bihan	small
du	black
gwenn	white
ruz	red
glas	green, blue, gray and purple (think of the typical landscape in Brittany and the Celtic countries in general, there is no clear distinction between the colors of the hills, the fields, the sea and the sky)
mad	good
fall	bad (think of “fell” in English)
hir	long
berr	court

- Very often, Breton family names come from adjectives describing a person’s peculiarity. So for instance, writer Anatol Ar Braz (Anatole the Big) becomes in French Anatole Le Braz. You will find numerous Breton family names based on that principle. Of course, when you write the name in Breton, you don’t use “le”, you go back to the initial Breton form “ar” and the adjective. Braz, bihan, hir and berr are very common Breton family names.
- Bihan is the word used in the name of the geographical region called the Morbihan, the region of Vannes in southern Brittany. Now you understand what it means: the small sea, and it is indeed like a small sea or a large bay, with numerous islands inside.
- Gwenn ha du: white and black is the official name of the Breton flag, which, as you probably know, uses only black and white in its colors, the colors of the ermine, which was the emblem of Breton royalty. The ermine (“erminig”) is still today the symbol of Brittany, and its stylized tails are used in the flag. The tail is often used alone to represent Brittany. The choice of the ermine comes from a tradition along which the last queen of Brittany, Duchess Anne, witnessed during a winter hunt how the small animal faced the hunters rather than soil its white fur by crossing a muddy river. She asked them to save the ermine, and the motto of Brittany became “kentoc'h mervel evet bezañ saotret” - “better die than be soiled”.

Breton Composers: *Paul Le Flem*

Keith Davies Jones

Paul Le Flem is widely considered to be Brittany's greatest composer. He was born in 1881 at Radon in Normandy, but grew up in Lézardrieux near Tréguier (Tregor), Côtes d'Armor, where he spoke Breton with his family, and learned at first hand the songs and gwerziou of the region. He was left an orphan at the age of 12. His early studies appear to have been supported by the French Navy after his musical talents were recognized at the Brest Lycée and brought to the attention of Joseph Guy Ropartz, who at that time was Director of the Conservatoire de Nancy. From 1899 to 1901, supported by a meager scholarship, he studied with Lavignac and Widor at the Paris Conservatoire. He then spent a year teaching in Russia, where he met Rimsky-Korsakov, and this experience probably led to his penchant for brilliant and colorful orchestration. On his return to Paris in 1902, he began a course of study with d'Indy and Roussel at the Schola Cantorum, later becoming the latter's deputy, and succeeding him as head of the counterpoint class in 1923. A fellow student at the Schola, Edgard Varèse, became a lifelong friend. Both were deeply influenced by the first performances of Debussy's opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, in 1902.

The earliest acknowledged work of Le Flem's maturity, the Piano Quintet of 1905, begins with a pentatonic theme, characteristic of this composer, and a strong scent of sea-breeze. The 'Triptyque symphonique' of 1912-13 includes the deeply felt 'Pour les morts' written in memory of two of his three children, Maurice and Nicolette, who had died during an epidemic. It is dedicated to his friend Marcel Labey (1875-1968), a Parisian-born composer who learned to speak Breton during childhood vacations spent at his family's summer-cottage in Trestraou en Perros-Guirec, and who returned to live in Brittany in later life. Despite its use of a large orchestra, the writing is restrained. The main theme of the work is once again pentatonic, and there is a strong modal flavor. The melodic contours of the work sometimes recall Delius. Here in the background, as ever in Le Flem's music is the sound of the sea, and the landscape of Brittany. Works from this period also include his First Symphony, and the opera, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and in both of them, popular Breton themes are used prominently.

With the outbreak of war, Le Flem was conscripted into the army, and although it seems he was not considered for combatant duties because of poor eyesight; presumably because of his knowledge of Russian, he was seconded to the Russian army, and whilst serving as

a stretcher-bearer on the Eastern front, he was awarded the Croix de guerre for his courage in 'rescuing the wounded whilst under enemy fire'.

After the Armistice, either from economic necessity or for whatever reason, he seems to have largely abandoned composition, taking a position as director of the chorus at the Opéra comique in Paris, and devoting himself to conducting, teaching, and promoting the music of others.

In 1935 he began to compose again, producing in that year an opera, 'La Folie de Lady Macbeth'. 'La Fête du printemps' for chorus and orchestra followed in 1937, and in 1938 'Le Rossignol de Saint-Malo', an opera based on a story from the Barzaz Breiz about a young woman who gives her older husband much cause for jealousy. This second period lasted up until 1976, when he was 95 years old. In 1947 he produced the work that is considered to be his masterpiece, the opera 'La magicienne de la mer', based on a story that had a lifelong fascination for him, the legend of Mari/Dahut and the sunken Kingdom of Ys. Although in this later phase, Le Flem does occasionally use traditional material in his music, the influence of his native Brittany is felt most strongly through the use of modal scales, and the natural speech rhythms of the Breton language.

The works written in the second period demonstrate a marked change of style from the earlier music, now incorporating elements of atonality, quartal harmony, syncopated rhythms, and with an altogether more aggressive outlook. It is somewhat disconcerting, in fact, to discover what seems almost to be the work of two different composers going by the same name. The 4th Symphony, written in 1971-2 after the death of his wife, Jeanne, is indeed a world apart from the music written before the First World War. This is a world now inhabited by the influential figure of Olivier Messiaen, whose *Turangalila* has echoes in this symphony, as does Walton's First Symphony. The music also sounds a little like Havergal Brian at times. Like Brian's late symphonies, this music seems to be an astonishingly energetic outpouring for a ninety year old composer.

Le Flem had a degree in philosophy from the Sorbonne, and was a classical and literary scholar who translated Sophocles into Breton. He died in Tréguier in 1984, at the age of 103. He composed four symphonies, seven operas, and many shorter pieces. His papers and manuscripts were donated to the Bibliothèque Gustav Mahler in Paris by his daughter, Jeanne Green.

Paul Le Flem : Selected Discography

Orchestral Works – Pour les morts (Triptyque symphonique), Symphonie #4, Rhenish Philharmonic Orchestra, cond. James Lockhart & Gilles Nopre, Marco Polo 8.223655

2 Interludes "La magicienne de la mer", *Symphonie #1*
Orchestre de Bretagne, cond. Claude Schnitzler, Timpani
IC 1021

Quintette pour piano et cordes. Quatuor Louvigny, Alain
Jaquon. Timpani IC 1077

References :

Vefa de Bellaing, *Dictionnaire des Compositeurs de
musique en Bretagne*. Ouest Éditions, Nantes, 1992

& CD liner notes by Michel Fleury



New Music from Brittany

An Interview with Actress and Singer **Nolwenn
Korbell**, January 2006

By Natalie Novik,

I met Nolwenn for the first time in 1987 at her mother's house in Douarnenez. You probably know or have heard of her mother, Andrea Ar Gouilh, one of the best known interpreters of Breton "gwerziou" (ballads) today. At the time, Nolwenn was a teenager and that evening she gave a striking rendition of a Breton love song "Tuchantig erru an hañv", in a pure and clear soprano voice I never forgot.

And then a few years ago, I was on the train from Paris to Quimper and a lovely young woman seated facing me was reading a play by Per Jakez Helias in Breton. What are the odds that two Breton speakers will be seated together on that train, you will ask? Today, unfortunately, quite slim. So I enquired, and discovered this was Nolwenn, all grown up, and very dedicated to her Breton heritage.

I called her this January when I was in Brittany for a short while, and asked to interview her. She agreed to meet me at her house in Pont-L'Abbé in southwestern Brittany.

Natalie: I remember your teenage voice. Did you know when you were a child that you would become a singer?

Nolwenn: when I was growing up, I wanted to be an actress, not a singer. At age fifteen though, I participated in a spoof of the Oscars, where I was playing Scarlett O'Hara and singing the aria of the Queen of the Night (from Mozart's "Magic Flute"). People liked it and came to ask me if I was going to be a singer. Actually, I went on to

study at the Dramatic Art Conservatory in Rennes for three years after finishing college.

There, we had singing lessons and I must say that both acting and singing were really great together. I knew the songs my mother was singing, particularly the repertoire from the *Barzaz Breiz*, the fantastic stories like the sorcery in "The Wax Child." My childhood imagination thrived on them. So while I do enjoy telling stories, I wanted to do something different from what my mother was doing. And through the theater, I found opportunities to sing.

Natalie: You were a light soprano at the time. How is your voice today?

Nolwenn: I followed courses for classical singing. I even tried to be admitted at the Paris Music Conservatory, but I did not pass the second part of the entrance exam. Alexander Danielovich, who is the choir master at the Rennes Opera, had a vocal group and had given me lessons. After that, though, I did not see him for two years as I went to spend some time in Wales. But he encouraged me to try the Paris Conservatory, saying sometimes the jury might be influenced more by the sound of a voice than by technique. I sang the air of Dido and had an extraordinary feeling of fulfillment as I did, both from mastering the technique and also at the same time, telling a story. So I gave it a try; it did not work and at the same time I was reaching the age limit for the entrance exam. Then I joined Alexander's vocal group and we sang a 16th century "Matthew's Passion" for the festival "Tombées de la Nuit" in Rennes in 1994. I discovered then the extraordinary pleasure of singing, how you get lost in it and learn to master your own voice. And I also found I could share this pleasure and this mastery with the audience.

Natalie: You are a Breton speaker, you speak to your son in Breton. How did you function in the language as a child?

Nolwenn: Both my parents spoke Breton to me from the time I was born, a deliberate choice on their part. My mother is the oldest of seven children, my father of five, but they are the only ones who have the language. My mother, Andrea, grew up in Pluguffant, speaking Breton with her grandmother who did not know French. I don't remember whether I grew up knowing only Breton, but I know I learned French in school, where I had a strong feeling I was not fitting in. In Douarnenez, there were no other Breton speaking children in my school. I felt different. They looked at me as a curiosity, but sometimes the other children would ask me how to say a word in Breton. As I grew up, we had Breton at home, French at school. At the time, I could not care less about the Breton independence movement, but I was vaguely thankful it existed. In the 90's, things started to change,

and I remember I wanted to become an actress so that I could exert my trade in my culture and in my language. In college in Rennes, I was supposed to take German, but I was spending much more time at the Celtic Studies department. I felt in exile in Rennes at 18, and therefore I had great pleasure finding people from my little corner of the world at the department! I was also working at the French regional television station, France-3, when I arrived in Rennes, and even before I arrived, I was dubbing French cartoons in Breton. The night we did that Oscar ceremony spoof, Youenn Gwernig was in the audience, and at that time, he was directing the Breton-speaking broadcasts at France-3. When I came back to Rennes, I was asked to be the anchor for the broadcasts and it helped me make a little money. I also played in a few short movies.

Natalie: What is your repertoire?

Nolwenn: I sing first and foremost for myself, I also sing my mother's songs. But right from the start, I decided I would not sing only traditional songs, it did not satisfy me. Then when I lived in Wales, I was singing in a Welsh group, and I noticed that in Wales, they sing everything - rock, reggae, classical - in their own language. I asked myself: why not? And I wrote my first song in 1994, for a Breton song contest in Brest. When I was working for the TV, I had invited the author of the contest to talk about it on the air, and he challenged me to try and I took him up on it. And then I told myself that if I could write one song, I could certainly write more. And then during the "Voix de Bretagne" in Brest with Bernez Tangi, I had the opportunity to sing four of my songs, and for the first time, share them with the public. But at the time, I was thinking that I needed to be sure I could make a CD to find the guts to continue. And it happened: I was at the "Tombées de la Nuit" festival in 2002 where Jean-Yves LeCorre from the Coop Breizh came to see me, and I jumped on the occasion to ask him to do a CD. He accepted, and I started to work on my songs. The CD came out in November 2003, entitled "N'eo ket echu" (it's not over). It sold well, with brand new songs in Breton, but we had no idea it would work that well, it was quite a surprise. We sold a total of 10,000 CD's.

At the same time, I started doing theater again, and I met the musicians. We went together to a number of festivals, like "Les Vieilles Charrues" in 2004, "Festival du Bout du Monde" in Crozon, Max Jacob in Quimper, the West-Northwest Festival... It turned out that the more I sang, the more pleasure I derived from singing. So we recorded a second CD last year, which will come out in April 2006.

The musical background on my CDs feature piano, marimba, electric basse, percussions, duduk, all kinds of instruments. For the first CD, I wanted to include the bombarde, but it just did not happen. On the second

one, I am marrying the guitar with the sound of the sitar. My intent is to create something with very warm sounds, muffled percussions, rounded sounds. I wanted to include the duduk because I heard it with Armenian musicians and I incorporated it in the traditional song "Deut ganin-me, plah yaouank".

On the first CD ("N'eo ket echu"), you will find the words to the songs, and you will note that some of them are strongly linked to traditional songs, like gwerz. Those that are further from the tradition are the ones where the words and the way to describe things are different. When I sing, I like to translate some of the wonderful expressions we have in Breton for the public, give them a sense by translating one or two sentences. I like to attract people to my songs who, normally, would tell me they are not interested. I like to pique their curiosity.

Natalie: Do you ever sing a cappella, unaccompanied?

Nolwenn: Yes, I do that from time to time, but I like instruments supporting a very simple melody, something that can lead to a new sound. I sing sometimes without instruments, like for instance "Daffydd ar Gareg Gwen" in Welsh. I love the sonority of Welsh. I included a new Welsh song on the last CD, and they have beautiful hymns and lullabies. Right now, I am preparing the instrumental support for the Glasgow Festival, where I will be performing on January 24th.

Natalie: Any concerts in the making?

Nolwenn: I will be in Paris at Bercy in March for St. Patrick's Day, I will also be at the Lorient Festival (8 minutes last year, 15 minutes this year). There is no such thing as a small concert. Last week, I was with Soig Siberil - we go places together - and we ended up giving a private concert for 100 people for a lady in Landevenez who likes to put together this sort of thing. In the past, I performed together with Gilles Servat, but now I am not planning any duos. It's not something I would like to do for a whole concert.

Natalie: What news from your mother, Andrea ar Gouilh?

Nolwenn: She is going to record another CD: on May 19th she will perform at the Cathedral in Quimper (*for the national Breton holiday of St. Yves*), and it will be recorded to make the CD. Some of her songs are on CDs that are no longer available, so she has decided to re-record them. She continues to perform from time to time, and just celebrated her 20th anniversary in July.

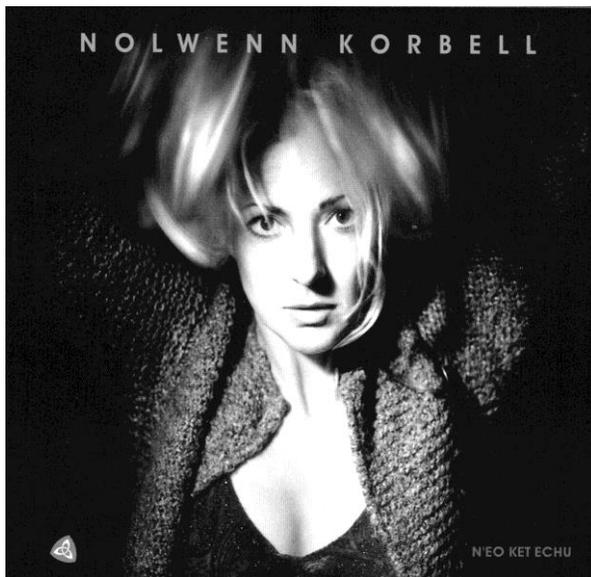


CD review: Nolwenn Korbell “N’eo ket echu” (It’s not over). Coop Breizh CD 948, 2003.

Natalie Novik

The CD itself is very nicely presented. Each song is featured in its original language (Breton, but also Welsh) with a translation in French. There are 12 songs in total, most of them written by Nolwenn. But before I get into them, let’s note one traditional Breton song “Deuit ganin-me, plah yaouank” (Come with me, young girl), a song in Welsh “Y Byd Newydd” written with Twm Morys, and my favorite, written with Bernez Tangi, “Plac’h ar gwele-kloz” (The girl with the closed bed). Why is it my favorite? Because it is a very witty song about a girl’s likes and dislikes and Nolwenn’s interpretation is very intelligent and funny.

Some newly composed songs are directly inspired by Breton tradition, like “Son ar plac’h n’he doa netra”, the song of the girl who did not have anything. She is a farm girl, but she is happy with little nothings, and the song piles on every acquisition like a numbering song, till she indeed has a lot at the end of the song. In the same vein, but playing on sounds, is “A-dreuz kleuz ha moger” (Through banks and walls), which has all the richness of the Breton language in it. And then, as could be expected from romantic Nolwenn, there are love songs. The melodies, the accompaniment, remind one definitely of Brittany, but they are her own, using the images of the Breton language to express love, abandonment, regrets, desire... She mentioned lullabies in her interview, and there is a tender “Luskell ma mab” (Lullaby for my son), directly inspired by the Welsh lullabies. And then there is curious song which



is certainly derived from Breton tradition, but at the same time full of ideas and dreams, called “Ma c’hemenez” (My seamstress).

The instrumentation of the songs is excellent, sometimes very discreet, other times very supportive of her voice. The melodies are, for want of another word, Celtic. There is a minor tone lurking even in the happier songs, and the nostalgic ones are as sad as Irish or Breton songs can be. The common thread is Nolwenn’s voice, which has matured now into a rounded mezzo, with some beautiful low notes, and a clear enunciation of every word. It is a pleasure to listen to her, and the Breton language comes out the winner in this CD.

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*More New Music from Brittany –
A Performance Review*

Natalie Novik

STARAC’H KERIEN

The Blues Brothers walked onto the stage at the Chateauneuf du Faou fest-noz. Black fedoras, dark shades, and black vests on white shirts. But, there were three guys, two girls, a guitar player and a drummer. My first reaction was to think: “the fest-noz is over, now we are getting the local rock band”, and I headed for the door.

But thinking it over, it was only 11 pm, the night was young, and the posters never advertised any rock music... So I stayed and the enthusiastic welcome of the crowd gave me a hint that something interesting was going to happen. It did: the Starac’h Kerien (don’t look it up in your dictionary, it does not mean a thing) is one of the local groups which have been around for a few years, seeking their way. It started with Fanchig, the lead singer, getting together with Stephane, and by 2004, they were four, and held their first performance, encouraged by well-known kan ha diskan singer Louise Ebrel.

The group today is composed of the following members:

Chantal Conan: one of the two women, is training to sing *kan ha diskan*, and knows Breton.

Carole Savina: a lover of traditional musics, plays the pipes in the famous first category Brieg Bagad.

Stéphane Archan: well-known guitar player, handles his electric or his folk guitar with equal ease.

Stéphane Riou: another traditional music fan, Stephane is Penn Soner in the bagad Kevrenn an Arvorig.

Bruno Robin: loves songs for dancing.

Daniel Inizan: loves sea shanties.

Fanchig Thépault: the leader of the group. Discovered *kan ha diskana* at age fifteen, has always dreamed of creating his own group. He is the other Breton speaker of the group.



That evening, their performance included numerous *an-dros* but also a very varied Gallo repertoire. Fanchig, the lead singer (*kaner*), has a good voice and the group

functions pretty much like a *kan ha diskana* choir; not only do they split into *kanerien* and *diskanerien*, overlapping with each other as they repeat phrases, but they sing in harmony like a choir. The result, accompanied by the guitar and the drum, is very dynamic and the texture of the songs becomes very rich. The crowd loved it, I have never seen the “rond de Loudeac” danced with such gusto and such rhythm.

I got to talk to them after their performance, and when I told Fanchig I knew most of what they had sung that evening from the repertoire of the “Mangeouses d’Oreilles”, a Gallo female group with twenty years of experience, he laughed and said he had known all these songs for thirty years. The members of the Starac’h Kerien are not as young as I thought: actually, it turns out the average age is around 40.

Fanchig offered to make a copy of the one CD they produced last year (they are planning another one by the end of this year), and I accepted gladly. I stopped by the school where he is teaching in Brieg the next day to pick it up, and was glad I did. The group is funny and talented. The repertoire is definitely Gallo - lots of things have been performed either by the Mangeouses d’Oreilles, but also by the Tri Yann, and Baron and Anneix. The CD was recorded when there were only four members in the group, and is entirely sung *a capella*, no instruments. There are times when Fanchig’s solos are a little on the weak side, but where the group sings together, they are excellent. If you like *an dro*’s, this is the CD for you.

But there are many other songs, and besides the choir-like interpretation of *kan ha diskana*, what characterizes the group is their witty rewriting of the words, sometimes with a really contemporary context. For instance, “Chez Mamie”, is one of those repetition songs: when I was one and a half years old, when I was two and a half years old,

and so on. In this interpretation, for each age, he has a different set of wheels and goes to visit Mamie (his grandmother), until he is sixteen and a half when, instead of visiting grandma, he visits the chicks. But by the time, he is forty and a half, and equipped with a nice car, he is back visiting Mamie...

Another song - the “toothless an dro” - is really hilarious in its imitation of small children or elderly people.

All through the CD and their performances, their sense of humor, their musicality and their inventiveness are very striking. They say what they enjoy the most are the rehearsals and the recordings, when they can have fun together and they probably spend more time laughing than singing. They are planning to create a web site some time this year, and when they do, you will see a note in Bro Nevez.



And Even More New Music from Brittany – New CDs

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Pascal Lamour. Yer’mat. L’OZ Productions L’OZ 46. 49’36 minutes. (www.lamour-music.com & www.l’oz-production.com)

The best innovative music from Brittany is often rooted in a deep understanding of oral traditions. And Pascal Lamour is no stranger to the linguistic and musical heritage of Brittany. He is the son of a farmer of the Vannes region and grew up immersed in traditions of this musically rich area of Brittany. He is also a “sonneur de couple” so the tradition of paired *bombarde* and *biniou* is also a part of his musical inheritance. But he is a master of many instruments found on this CD and clearly enjoys experimenting with more electronic media to create a unique music of his own.

While a few texts are drawn from the Breton tradition most are written by Lamour, and the music is of his composition. There is a nice mix of textures and themes as diverse as the rhythms that fuel them – and most of the 13 selections on the CD are dances. An *an dro* lends itself nicely to a Middle Eastern feel in one case and a fast *plinn* has the relentless drive of rock music in another. You also find a *laridé de Rhuys*, an *an dro mod koh*, *larides* in 6 and 8 time, a *kas a barh*, and a *Rond de Saint Vincent-sur-Oust*. All these tunes invite you to get up and dance, and you certainly can. But, it’s not a simple as that.

There are many layers to the music and they convey complex texts on a variety of themes – bits of poetry and

thoughts to evoke an atmosphere more often than long narrative stories. While most of the texts are in Breton – A variety of instruments are used very effectively to create a unique atmosphere for each text. This is true for the texts set to dance rhythms as well as the one melody on the CD – a traditional song collected on the Ile au Moines. You hear the bagad Ronsed Mor de Lokoal Mendon as well as biniou and bombarde, but also whistles, harmonica, various electric and acoustic guitars, banjo and koto, saxophone, harp, and a variety of percussion.

Rhythm is also provided by electronic programming and keyboards where the work of a studio mix can add magic and drive. In the use of spoken texts it is clear that the rhythm of the Breton language itself can be effectively highlighted. In short, there is a lot going on in this music. There's a meeting of the old and new and east and west, of Brittany and a much larger world. It is distinctly Breton in its rhythms – vocal and instrumental -- and in its innovation and successful blend of the familiar with something a little other worldly.

This carries over in the very interesting CD notes which feature old photos of Breton people from past decades – and their cars, tractors, horses and fields. These are transformed into new art as layers of bright colors are added by painters – farmers from the village of Nizon who gathered first in 1992 to become later called “Les Peintres du Hangar’t” (“hangars” are big farm sheds). In their colorful transformation, these photos of everyday people and work scenes take on the same other worldliness as the music and texts of the CD.

I have not heard too many Breton recordings where song and the sound of language itself were so effectively woven together into a mix of diverse musical sounds and rhythms. And, where visual arts are also a strong part of the experience.

This is a CD which requires repeat visits for the musical and visual images. I've enjoyed it more and more each time I have listened to it.



La Musique bretonne – Les groupes à danser. L'Anthologie, Vol. 1. Coop Breizh CD 966. 2 CDs 74'01 & 65'26 minutes.

The creation of new music in Brittany has gone on side by side with the generation-to-generation transmission of traditional music such as the paired playing of bombarde and biniou koz, accompanied singing for dancing, and the storytelling of ballads (in both Breton and French).

Borrowing from other musical traditions and incorporating new musical instruments is not a new

the Breton of the Vannetais region – you'll also hear English, Welsh, Wolof and Mandingo. phenomenon in Brittany. In the 1930s Breton “sonneurs” picked up saxophones for jazz ensembles where new dances were included alongside the older ones. And the bagad was created in the 1950s and has flourished ever since. As noted in the excellent introductory notes to this double CD set, it was also in the 1950s that you had the first real experimentation in using non-Breton instruments to interpret Breton music with Jean L'Helgouach's ensemble Evit Koroll and Pierre Yves Moign's group Son ha Koroll.

With the “folk revivals” of the 1960s in Britain and the U.S., musicians of Brittany (and France) were given new incentives and models to use in creating their own “folk” groups. It was in the 1970s that groups using acoustic and electric instruments and sometimes voice started to really take off in Brittany, fueled by festivals and the popularity of the reinvented fest noz which gave groups plenty of opportunities to perform.

This double CD and 80-page hard-bound booklet feature 36 of hundreds of musical groups active in the 1970s, 80s and 90s – many of which are still going strong today. And certainly most of the musicians of these groups are active today as soloists or in new groups. The selection of bands for the CDs is based on their role primarily as a dance band for festoù-noz, and it is music for Breton dances that you hear. There's a strong representation of *an dro* and *fisel*, but quite a mix of dances traditional to both Upper and Lower Brittany, including: *laridé*, *plinn*, *gavotte*, *gavotte pourlet*, *ridee*, *hanter dro*, *scottisch*, *rond de Saint Vincent-sur-Oust*, *kost-ar-c'hoat*, *rond de Loudia*, *an avant-deux*, and a suite of *branles marichins* from the Nantes country.

It is also evident that the selection of groups for the CDs has to do with quality – these are all bands that you could count on to draw a crowd if they were on the slate of musicians and singers for a fest noz. And these are bands that were successful because their roots in Breton traditional tunes and rhythms allowed them to be highly innovative while holding dancers' attention. And believe me, if a band was fuzzy about the rhythm, they would receive the ultimate insult at a fest noz – no one would dance! I have witnessed this in the case of a pair of bombarde and biniou players too drunk to hold a rhythm and in the case of a band at a large festival whose music confused dancers – is that a gavotte or plinn? No confusion in the case of the performances on these CDs – even in the most exotic mixes of instruments and jazzy swings.

It is especially nice to see a strong representation of bands who were active in the 1970s – some of which are still active today: Ar Skloferien, Bleizi Ruz, Diaouled ar Menez, Dir ha Tan, Galorn, Kanfardet ar c'hoat,

Kanfarded Rostren, Kistinidiz, Korriganed, Kouerien Sant-Yann, La Godinette, La Mirlitantouille, Satanazet and Sonerien Du. The 1980s are often described as a “dry” period for Breton music, but a number of great bands saw their start during this decade: BF15, Carré Manchot, Dremmwel, Follenn, Marialla, Pennoù Skoulm, Skolvan, Tammles, Ti Jaz. Bands starting up in the 1990s on the CDs are: Ar Re Yaouank, Darhaou, Diwall, Emsaverien, Filifala, Gwenfol Orchestra, Hamon Martin Quintet, Karma, Loened Fall, Menestra, Pevar Den, Spontus, and Tan Ba'n Ti.

A few bands of the 1970s sound very “70s” and the sound quality is not always the best. One can definitely hear a growth in sophistication over the years – especially in the use of instruments like guitar and percussion to move beyond very simple beat-keeping. Inspired by the folk revival in Ireland and the U.S., Breton bands in the 1970s often included banjos and wooden “clackers” or spoons – thankfully (in my opinion) these disappeared in the 80s. Although sounding a bit dated in some ways, when it comes to dancing, the bands of the 70s exude a joy that you don't always find so evident in more elegant arrangements of later years.

As you move into the 90s you find a more daring incorporation of the swing and textures of jazz and other world musics. This was not entirely lacking in earlier bands. The band Galorn, for example, has a very jazzy arrangement of a Rond de Saint Vincent where you hear the genius of Jean-Michel Veillon on flute already evident in the early 1980s when this tune was released on a 45 rpm record. But, it is interesting to hear on these CDs the transition in style over the years and the development of more elaborate arrangements in the 90s.

As has been the case for all of the “Anthologies” in this series by Coop Breizh, the 85 pages of notes in their hard-back book format are very well done. Each group is presented in alphabetical order with two pages. On one page is a text giving the history of the group and introducing its members, and the facing page has a photo of the band and/or LP/CD cover. A discography is given for each group as well as contact information – an email address and/or website so you can find out more.

Two pages reproducing fest noz posters will make some of you nostalgic if you experienced Brittany in the 1970s when posters were virtually the only way you could track down some festoù noz. Today the internet makes it much easier to find the many festoù noz and festoù deiz that take place throughout Brittany on any given weekend.

You may have a favorite fest noz band that is not on this CD, but this is a great selection of some of the best. To choose just one selection to “represent” any of these group is indeed a challenge, but the selection here does

justice to the innovative genius of Breton musicians and their passion for dance.



A-Bouez-Penn. A veg de veg – Paysage sonore en Pays Vannetais. A-Bouez-Penn / Coop Breizh DB15. 2005. 3 CD set: 71'38, 69'48 and 68'58 minutes. (A-Bouez-Penn, rue des Genêts, 56310 Bubry)

This is not a brand new release, but one I recently treated myself to as a Christmas present. Released in the fall of 2004 as a 3-CD set, this recording is the work of the organization called A-Bouez-Penn who wanted to make the rich heritage of their home region – Pays Pourlet, Pays de Pontivy, Pays de Baud – accessible to a wider public. This first set in a series to come was the fruit of two years of work. It is a gift to those who want to learn more about the Vannetais musical tradition and language from singers and musicians who hope that the heritage they have absorbed as part of their life will be passed along to others. After all, “a veg de veg” means from mouth to mouth.

On the three CDs there are over 100 singers and musicians – young and old – all in fine voice. Most of the recordings are relatively recent so the sound quality is excellent. The variety of voices, interspersed by instruments and the mix of slower melodies with dances makes these CDs very easy to listen to from beginning to end despite their length – 69 to 71 minutes each.

Seventy pages of jacket notes provide all the song texts (in Vannetais Breton, or French in a few cases) and a short summary in French of the topic as well as notes on the origins and performance of tunes and songs. All texts can also be found in a more “standard” Breton on the website <http://aveg.dastum.net>. A map is provided to situate the towns from which performers come and some basic definitions are provided for those new to Breton music. You will also find photos of all (or nearly all) of the performers.

Songs make up the largest part of the CDs – unaccompanied ballads and many songs for dances as well as a few marches which in Brittany more closely resemble a dance. Although ballads are sung by one individual, many of the songs of a lighter nature sung for fun, or for dancing, are led by an individual who is then repeated by a group of others. This responsive style is like the kan ha diskan singing for dances in western Brittany, but you don't have the overlapping of voices at the beginning and end of phrases. As is the case for singing for dancing throughout Brittany (in Breton or French) there is no instrumental accompaniment. In the Vannetais region as in French and Gallo speaking eastern Brittany it is common to have a lead singer repeated by a group instead of just one individual.

Song topics reflect classic themes on courtship and marriage, and soldiers going off to war in hopes of their sweethearts remaining faithful during their long absence. But there is also a song about labor unrest in the early 1960s and a song about the Chouan rebel Jean Jan and his capture and death in 1798 – in the very area of Melrand and Pontivy featured on the CDs. There are also lighter songs called “menteries” where the idea is to tell the most outrageous lies. Nearly all songs are in Breton – the Vannetais Breton which has a “softer” sound to it and which takes some work to understand or read for those accustomed only to a more standard “learner’s” Breton. An eight-minute story allows you to hear Breton as it is spoken and there are also short “témoignages” and a delightful discussion and demonstration of bird songs.

The CDs include a nice mix of instrumental music - especially paired bombarde and binioù - as well as accordion and some less usual “instruments” like a vibrating leaf and ringing stones which sound like a xylophone with just a few notes. Whether performed by voice or instruments a variety of dances from this area of Brittany are presented: the *gavotte pourlet*, *en dro* and *laridé* are favored, but you also hear examples of *kas a-barh*, *kost-er-hoed*, *hanter dro*, and *laridé-gavotte*.

The performances are captured in peoples’ homes, as a melody or song is “collected” by other singers and musicians, or recorded live at a fest noz (dance), filaj (gathering to sing, tell stories and talk), or other social occasion. The performers are not big stars or professional musicians – just people of the Vannetais area who grew up with the traditional songs, tunes, stories and sayings they present. There’s nothing fancy here – just a diverse presentation of the wealth of sounds – the “paysage sonore” or “sound scape” of the Vannetais country of Brittany.

It is not surprising that the group A-Bouez-Penn was awarded the “Breton speaker of the year” prize by France 3 Ouest for this outstanding work. Although I have not yet seen notice of their release, Volumes 4-5-6 were due out this past fall. Certainly something to look forward to by those who want to hear more from this very rich heritage.



TWO NEW SONG COLLECTIONS

Compact disc recordings of music traditional to a particular region of Brittany like *A veg de veg* reviewed above are most often accompanied by lots of jacket notes giving background information as well as song texts. Two new publications about Breton music feature a book with song texts which are accompanied by CDs.

Here the collected song texts and background information are given primary attention while the sound recordings serve as a supplement to them.

Notes about these have been gleaned from information in *Bremañ* 292 (Feb 2006) and *Ar Men* 149 (Nov.-Dec. 2005) for Ifig Troadeg and *Musique Bretonne* 193 (Nov.-Dec. 1005) for Dastum Bro-Ereg.

Ifig Troadeg. Carnets de route – Gwerziou ha sonioù Bro-Dreger / Ballades et chants du Trégor. Dastum Bro-Dreger. 380 pages & 2 CDs.

Ifig Troadeg is a great singer of Breton language ballads and songs for dance, but before he started singing he first spent years collecting traditional songs and studying earlier text collections of song such as those of la Villemarqué and Luzel. From a family where traditional song and story telling was well loved, he started his own collecting of songs and tales of his native Trégor area starting in the late 1970s. This book presents his collection work which has spanned some 30 years, and includes over 200 gwerziou (ballads) and sonioù (songs). The Breton texts and French translations are provided as well as information on the source of the text. The two CDs present 52 selections from Troadeg’s years of collection work.

Dastum Bro-Ereg. Collecte de Jean-Louis Larboulette: 1902-1905 – Chants traditionnels vannetais. Dastum Bro Dreger DBE 035. book & 2 CDs

From 1902 to 1905 Jean-Louis Larboulette collected some 160 songs in four notebooks. In the year 2000 members of Dastum Bro-Ereg began work to publish three of the notebooks – presenting the texts in Vannetais Breton with a French translation as well as introduction to this collector and the repertoire presented.

As the oldest general collection of songs from this region, the songs have historical significance but are also of linguistic interest. They include songs for dances, ballads, love songs and humorous and satirical texts, and transcriptions of some tunes that pipers used at weddings – a cross section of the music of this period when French popular culture still had little influence.

For those particularly interested in the Vannetais dialect of Breton, an introduction by linguist Léon Fleuriot (1923-1987) will be appreciated. This was destined for an earlier publication by Dastum that never appeared.

The songs on the two CDs are interpreted by Sophie Le Hunsec and Loeiz Le Bras who were both engaged in the preparation of the notebooks for publication. These performances are intended to present the music as Larboulette transcribed it rather than serve as innovative performances where the artist's skills are highlighted.

This book of songs and music, and the CDs which bring some of this to life, are a valuable resource for those with an interest in the Breton language and certainly for singers and musicians who want to learn more about the repertoire of this region 100 years ago.



HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD New CD Recordings from Brittany

The following brief notes are based on CD reviews and notes found in: Armor 429 (Oct. 2005), 430 (Nov. 2005) & 432 (Jan. 2006), Ar Men 149 (Nov.-Dec. 2005), Al Liamm 352 (Here 2005), Musique Bretonne 193 (Nov.-Dec. 2005) & 194 (Jan.-Feb. 2006), Le Peuple Breton 503 (Dec. 2005).

Jakez ar Borgn. Aiou! Keit Vimp Beo. BREN 2005/1. This is a collection of 13 songs in Breton composed and sung by Jakez ar Borgn (with help from younger voices of Riwana Baudu and Bleuen ar Borgn). The music has a traditional feel but is more rock and “boogie-woogie” – geared to young people with texts that cover a lot of topics – from everyday bumps (aiou!) to respecting nature, and planting cabbage. A number of songs touch on more serious topics of war, child labor, poverty and globalization.

Ars'ys Trio. Spirale. Ars'ys ARS 05/3. A trio including composer and organist Hervé Lesvenan, saxophonist Jean Preneta, and uilleann piper Loïc Bléjean with new music for this unusual instrumental combination.

Awen Magic Land. Kerlouan. Awen Records / Rikou Soner RSCD 264. This CD includes songs in Breton inspired by both Breton and Spanish traditions, with both an acoustic and electronic spin. Musicians include Maria Desbordes (tin whistle, uilleann pipes and song); Carlos Soto (sax and flute), Roland Conq (guitar) and Yannig Noguét (accordion).

Bagad de Vannes – Melinerion. Gwenn ha Blue. Self-produced BV02 / VOC 236. This is the second CD by this bagad – soon to celebrate their 50th anniversary. This CD includes suites of music for concert performance and contests recorded in the studio.

Jean Baron & Christian Anneix. Dansoù c'hoari. Keltia Musique KMCD 164. Dances interpreted by one of the best know and most recorded bombarde and biniou pairs of Brittany. The CD notes include detailed information on dance steps, explanation of musical themes, and the geographic location of dances and traditions presented.

Marcel Berrou. Ainsi va la terre. Coop Breizh MB 1205. A former actors with the Breton language troupe Strollad Ar Vro Bagan, Berrou is now a singer and on this CD he sings in both Breton and French with a variety of instrumental accompaniment including Pol Quefféléant on harp and Patrick Audoin on piano.

Roland Brou & Patrick Couton. Complaintes et chansons. Self-produced (patcouton@free.fr) Roland Brou is one of the finest voices of the French language song traditions of Upper Brittany – for both ballads and songs for dancing. Patrick Couton plays a variety of instruments and here he accompanies the song with Hawaiian guitar – an unusual but good choice. They perform the spine-chilling ballads about murder and disaster typical of both the Breton and French language ballad tradition of Brittany as well as lighter songs.

Centre Marc-Le-Bris. Mergerdi la véprée ... au Cosqhé / Mercredit après-midi au Cosquer. Centre Marc Le Bris (www.dastum.net). A collection of songs, stories, sayings and discussion of cultural life in the area of Uzé and Loudéac collected from residents of a retirement home over the course of a year. A wonderful project to create social bonds between young and old and to insure the transmission of a rich heritage from Gallo Brittany.

Cécile Corbel. Harpe celtique et chants du monde. Keltia Musique RSCD 270. Singer and Celtic harp player with a repertoire of song and music from Brittany but also drawing on other world traditions (from Cajun to Jewish), including her own compositions.

Dastum. Pays Pagan / Bro Bagan: Un allig c'hoazh – Chants et dañs round. Dastum. La Bretagne des Pays 1. 72 minutes. This is the first in a new series by Dastum to focus on various cultural regions of Brittany. This first is devoted to Bro Bagan – the far northwestern coast of Brittany. Included are recordings of the “round” dance unique to this area, as well as storytelling – all in the Leonard dialect of Breton spoken by the performers. The CD includes 20 selections collected over the past 20 years by Dastum Bro-Leon and through a special collection project led by the theater troupe Strollad ar Vro Bagan and the cultural association Tremeneac'h Beo. A 47-

page booklet introduces the performers on the CD and the musical traditions of this region, and provides texts for all the songs with a French translation.

Dastum Bro Dreger. 30 vloaz – Festival Plinn du Danouët. Dastum Bro Dreger.

Along with a 112-page booklet and photographic essay, this CD documents 30 years of the festival for the dance called plinn held in the town of Danouët. This is a gem of a small festival in August that celebrates dancers and musicians, and which tends not to attract a lot of tourists.

Dastum Bro Dreger. Bouloù Pok, un Mardi Gras pas comme les autres. Encyclopédie Sonore du Trégor.

Dastum Bro Dreger EST06.

The sixth in the “Sound Encyclopedia of Tregor” produced by the Dastum branch in that region. This CD focuses on the championship for “boules” organized each Mardi Gras in the town of Guerlesquin..

Dastum Bro Ereg. Baleaden e bro an Oriant. DBE001 / DAS 14

This CD includes 14 traditional songs and tunes for melodies, marches and dances of the Lorient (an Oriant) region. They are performed by Yann and Stéphane Kermabon on bombarde and biniou, Odile Ribeyre and Magali Le Sdiellour with a fiddle-accordion duo, with some accompaniment by Dom Molard with percussions and Soazig Kermabon on harp.

Germain Desbonnet & Gregory Le Lan. Hommage à Saint-Patrick. Coop Breizh FB 03.

This CD includes 17 compositions for the organ and bombarde duo of Desbonnet and Le Lan. Notes about this new CD didn't give much of a description, but one would assume an Irish theme.

Dom Duff. Lagan. BNC Productions.

Dom Duff uses a variety of musical styles (rock to folk) for songs in Breton, French and English on contemporary themes. He is the composer of 11 of 12 selections on this CD.

Melaine Favennec. Hey! Ho! Dylie Productions DY250. Favennec is a “singer-songwriter”: who uses Breton and French in his texts and who composes and draws music and rhythms from the Breton tradition.

Les Fileuses de Nuit. Trio de harpes celtiques. Studio BNC.

Aurore Bréger, Clotilde Touillaud and Marie Wambergue release their first CD of Celtic harp and electroharp with traditional and composed, high energy, music sure to please those annoyed by the image of “softness” and “ethereal fairies” that get attached to Celtic harp music.

Les Goristes. C'pas triste! Keltia Musique MMCD 167.

The singers and musicians of this group specialize in satirical texts (in French) on all topics – attacking local and less local politicians and underlining human failures of all kinds. Nothing is sacred and this CD includes a version of the Nativity where Jesus hails from the Breton city of Brest.

Groupeement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine & Dastum. Jannette Maquignon. Dastum – Grands interprètes de Bretagne.

Jeanette Maquignon (1906-1998) was one of the great voices of the Redon area of Gallo Brittany. For its 30th anniversary the Groupeement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine has produced a CD to honor this singer who was active with this organization and who made a huge impact on a number of singers and musicians of this area of Brittany. Her repertoire included all kinds of songs – for dancing or drinking, marches, humorous and satirical songs, and wonderful long ballads (“complaintes”). The choice of selections for the CD takes into account this diversity as well as a range of performance settings – from the intimacy of her home to various public performances and festivals. 56 pages of CD notes include song texts as well as reminiscences from those who knew her well: Jean-Bernard Vighetti and Jean-Louis Latour, who were active for many years collecting and promoting the rich traditions of the Redon area. [Note that the title for this CD may be different. Oddly enough, the article describing the production of this CD in *Musique Bretonne* 194 did not give specifics on the CD title or any reference numbers]

Katel & Bernard Benoit. Katel dit Glenmor. Sobridi Musiques SB 027.

Katel reads the poetry of Glenmor – a militant poet and singer famous in the 1960s and 70s whose powerful words are still worth a good listen. Benoit provides his own compositions and performs them as a base for the recitations.

Kanerion Pleuigner. Voix de Bretagne – Kanerion Pleuigner, Choeur d'hommes de Pluvigner. Coop Breizh / Label Production.

For 35 years this unique “choir” of men have been performing religious and secular songs of the Vannetais tradition – in Breton. You won't hear fancy four-part harmonies, but simple unison singing of a group of some 25 men – sometimes with a lead singer to which the group responds. This is a double CD recorded at the Basilica of Sainte Anne d'Auray and in Pluvigner. They are joined by bombarde players André Le Meut, Fabrice Lothode and Georges Bothua, and organists Pascal Marsault and Véronique Le Guen. 90 pages of hard-bound jacket notes (a little book) provide an introduction to these singers and their repertoire.

Liamm. Liamm. Coop Breizh / Liam DB10.

This group includes two singers – Mari-Elen Poupon-Tonnerre and Natacha Betzy-Raly – as well as cellist H  l  ne Bass, and violinist Jonathan Dour with new compositions and arrangements of traditional Breton airs and dances.

Bernard Loffet. Moteur. BL 1-05.

This CD includes traditional Breton airs and dances as well as compositions performed on accordion (with a few vocals as well) by Bernard Loffet.

Nijal. Taolenn Zouar. Nijal-music Nij 01.

This is a trio of well-known musicians of Brittany: Alain Rouquette (piano), Eric Liorzou (guitar) and Dom Molard (percussion). They have been part of the groups Den, Bleizi Ruz and Skolvan among others. They perform dances in this unique trio of strings and percussion.

Oscar Wallas. Intramuros. Vocation Records Voc 216.

A rock band with lead singer Christophe Reuill   who interpret texts which oppose all the “isms” that limit freedom and the unthinking and uncreative way people go about their lives.

Les Ours du Scorff. La Bonne p  che. Keltia Musique KMCD 170.

This is the fifth CD in ten years for this group which features songs for children which are also interesting for adults. The songs are full of animal characters and the music pulls from Breton tradition as well as other world traditions. The success of this group is guaranteed by its cast of great musicians: Singers Gilbert Bourdin and Laurent Jouin, and musicians Fa  nch Landreau, Jacques-Yves R  hault and Soig Siberil. They are joined by a few guests: Jacky Molard, Antoni Volson and H  l  ne Labari  re.

Jean-Luc Roudaut. La Ronde des Z'animaux. Coop Breizh JLB 009.

Roudaut is a songwriter who specializes in music for children. His texts and music reflect the dances of Brittany and are fanciful and fun – and not lost on adults. He is accompanied by Eric Liorzou on guitar and some younger voices as well.

Alan Stivell – various

Harmonia Mundi has remastered and released four classic Stivell albums first recorded from 1975 to 1995: Dublin (National Stadium Live). Harmonia Mundi KE3 100 (1975), Symphonie Celtique, Tir na nOg. Harmonia Mundi KE3 101 (1980), Again, Harmonia Mundi KE3 102 (1993), and Brian Boru, Harmonia Mundi KE3 103 (1995).

Takuta Gong. Takuta Gong. Gallomusic CAM001

This is a group of four musicians: Alban Sorette on electric bass and guitars, Jean-Denis Toumit on

bombarde and clarinet, Flavien Sorette on accordion and piano, and Meenja on “diverse other instruments.” The review for this CD was also vague on the style of this “groove” music.

Les Trompettes du Mozambique. Les Trompettes du Mozambique Self-produced Tdm 01. CD & DVD

15 years ago this group started off as a handful of bombarde players from some of the top bagads of Brittany looking for freer expression. With the addition of brass and percussion, the group took on concert performances and the repertoire was a mix of Breton-funk-Klezmer-jazz-other. This first CD includes six compositions by the group. The DVD presents a concert given at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival as well as clips from tours where you get a sense of the outlandish costumes these musicians sometimes wear. They have nothing to do with Mozambique, but the bombarde is a trumpet-like instrument made from wood from Africa.

Tud ar Vro Association. Unan, Daou Tri. Pagan tradition chant  e. Tud ar Vro Association.

This is a double CD with 38 songs from the Bro Bagan – Pays Pagan – region of northwestern Brittany. It includes songs for dancing as well as ballads from this area performed by young and old who have grown up with this music and hope to transmit it to future generations. It is accompanied by a 68-page booklet which introduces this region and its traditions and provides song texts.

Anne Vanderlove. Ses plus belles chansons. Coop Breizh / Avel Ouest CD 970.

This Breton “chanteuse” has been performing for many years and this CD gathers her best loved songs.



SAVE THE DATE

The U.S. ICDBL will be back at the **Potomac Celtic Festival** in Leesburg, Virginia, with our information tents This year the festival is **Saturday, June 17 and Sunday, June 18**. This has been a great opportunity for U.S. ICDBL members to meet each other and help festival attendees learn about Brittany and the Breton language. For more information about the festival: www.pcfest.org

Is Celtic barbarism a humanism ?

Jean Pierre Le Mat

I must tell you, I hardly knew him.

I remember seeing him in Rennes, a long time ago. He was a student then in the Breton main town, and he did not have white hair yet. He was part of those young rebels, talkative and intrepid, who stuck subversive posters on the walls, demonstrated in the streets, sneered at the police and cursed the bourgeoisie. He probably spent many sleepless nights talking about freedom.

Yes, that was the man... I did not expect to meet him here, in a hamlet nested in the center of Brittany. He welcomed the tourists in his artist workshop. I stayed discreetly in a corner, not to disturb the transactions. I could appreciate quietly his paintings. They fit with the power and the mystery of the place, and I imagined the long road, arid and sinuous, which had carried him here.

My glance roved on long coloured lines when he shouted to me vigorously:

- Hey, Yowan... I have been told that you spread stories of barbarians? Are you ashamed to be civilized?

- You probably want to speak about the history of Brennos, answered I merrily. I will not resist the pleasure of repeating it for you...

During the third century before Christ, a huge expedition of 300.000 people left the Celtic Gaul, moving towards the east. Men, women, children... At their head, a warlord named Brennos. His goal: to conquer the temple of Delphi and to plunder it.

All the reasons called upon by Brennos are not known. It is said that he coveted the gold of the temple. "The Gods," said he, "do not value gold. This is obvious through the fact that they allow the men to get it ". So, there was no reason to offer or to let to them this yellow stuff. It was known that the temple of Delphi was full of this gold which was of no use for the Gods.

Other reasons undoubtedly guided him, deeper and more obscure. The god Apollo who was adored in Delphi went down, according to the ancient writers, from the Hyperboreans. Who were these legendary folks? Could be the Celts? Anyway, the companions of Brennos knew something about Delphi and the god Apollo, and maybe they had old and excellent reasons to visit him. But we have lost the traces of these motivations. The oldest and the most powerful incentives are often the least avowable.

The Brennos expedition left Gaul and followed the Danube. It was attacked by the Illyrian armies on the banks of the river. The Celtic warriors overcame them, and the expedition continued on its road. Brennos did not want to create an empire, he did not impose any tribute. His target was neither power nor money.

When the Celts arrived in Macedonia, the troops of Ptolemy Keraunos barred his way. The warriors of Brennos crushed the Macedonian army. The head of Ptolemy was cut off and held up at the end of a spade. The kingdom of Macedonia was not defended any more; there was no longer any army, nor a chief. The Celts agreed to serve as mercenaries during several years.

One day, Brennos recalls to all the great goal. Let us imagine the secret meetings during the night, close to the campfires... Eyes shining, ears open, mouths smiling... Let us imagine the muscles quivering, and the fists closing again on the pommels of the swords.

The operation was carefully organised, the attack closely planned. A part of the expedition was sent to ravage the east of Greece and to make a diversion. Brennos crossed the Thessaly mountains with 50,000 men. They rushed at Delphi, quick as a flash. The Celts hustled everything on their way, but never went back. The Greeks could not prevent the invasion. The Celtic army reached its target. The initial reaction of Brennos, while entering in the sanctuary, was to roar with laughter by realizing that the Greeks represented the Gods in human form.

Outside, the place was full of noise and fury. Then, on a sign of Brennos, maybe the burst of his laughing, the temple was ransacked.

Brennos considered himself as the only warlord in charge of the Celtic raid. That is why he asked to get all the spoils for himself. Then he redistributed them to his men, keeping nothing for himself.

Can we measure the happiness and the exaltation of Brennos in this moment? He just reached the ultimate goal of his existence. The cycle was achieved, and there is nothing to add to it. No desire, no hope remained then. He organized a huge feast in the plain of Delphi, during which he got drunk and committed suicide...



- All right, this story is not ordinary. There is something, however, which leaves me dissatisfied. OK for Brennos, who fulfilled his destiny. But what about his companions?

- Many tales were told about them. According to the Roman writer Strabo, a part of the expedition would have returned near Toulouse, north of the Pyrenees mountains, bearing in the shield of Brennos the treasure of Delphi. Another part would have continued on its road towards the east, in search of a new Grail. Fourteen years after the plundering of Delphi, they were in Cappadocia, fighting with Ariobarzan III, king of Pontus, against the Egyptians. Maybe during the feast the idea of a new republic also arose: they will create Galatia, in Asia Minor. These Celts are today remembered as unruly fellows when we listen to the Paul's epistles to the Galatians...

-... and, wandering from one place to another, we are now in Brittany! Do you believe that the tales that you just told me are true?

- This question never troubled me. It is what the Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily tells about these ancient events. There are of course other versions, but which suit me less than this one.

Legend or truth? Who is right and who is wrong? The obsessional search of truth distorts the truth itself. Some say that Joan of Arc was not a shepherdess, others say that Shakespeare never existed. Let us them speak! These futile questions excite the fanatic and irritate the inquisitor. The story of Joan of Arc is more interesting than the girl herself. And the tale of Brennos impresses me much more than a corpse 23 centuries old.

- I give you the right to appreciate a tale, even if it is historically suspect. But I do not agree with your speech about violence and war. You seem to approve the killers!

- "Freedom or Death!"...The heroes of all times and all countries told us that terrible advise. Supreme happiness seems to be linked with a supreme risk... Brennos sowed on his way freedom and death, with the same liberality. But the barbarian fury, the fury of the lions or of the men alike, do not degrade their victims; they kill them. Nowadays violence has this hateful characteristic that it is uglier. The victor humiliates his victim before destroying him, and the defeated inspires dislike. That is not a real progress.

- Yowan, I will not speak again with you about the historical truth... I do not protest against your wild imaginings about violence. However I am puzzled...

I wonder whether you are completely deprived of morality; or if, on the contrary, you are looking for morality everywhere... What do you find so enthralling with this tale?

- The tale of Brennos is that of a man who had a goal in life. It is the history of a Celtic adventure, a conquest which was not aimed at domination. The volunteers of the expedition were free men and free women, masters without slaves. They never tried to have some. They knew how to be a

victor without being an oppressor. What revolutionaries can boast to have done the same?

- I don't know... Che Guevara, maybe?

- Che Guevara? The idol of the young rebels? Tell me... The man was half Argentinean and half-Irish. What would have occurred if he had conquered the government of Bolivia? Do you believe that the people over there would have kept among them this dangerous foreigner?

- He would have behaved like Brennos...

- Could be. But the story is not this one. And, according to whether you prefer the modern or the old myth, you can see Brennos as a Guevara who overcame, or Guevara as an unfinished Brennos. Deep inside my Breton skull, I find the Brennos story more enlightening. I know that it is a little brutal, but all passion stories are impetuous.

At any time in history, the youth catches fire and expresses itself through passion stories. I understand its despair nowadays, in a world which is not built any more with wood but with concrete. In faraway Delphi, the ruins are still hot with an ancient fire; its ashes bring us the cheery memory of a Celtic adventure.

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Breton History - Censored

Lois Kuter

This January the Prefect of Finistère forbid the town of Carhaix to erect a sign for tourists on National Route 164 at the entrance to the town. This censorship was directed specifically at the image on the sign of Sebastian ar Balp, the leader of the Bonnets Rouge revolt of 1675. The sign also includes an image of an old half-timber house of Carhaix and a Roman urn, since the town was an important crossroads during Roman occupation with seven major roads traversing it and has some interesting archeological sites. Another part of the sign depicts a rock concert with an electric guitar player silhouetted against a crowd with a Breton flag floating above. This image relates to the internationally known Festival des Vieilles

Charrues which attracts some 150,000 people each year.

The revolt of the Bonnets Rouge is certainly a well known part of the history of this region. Hachette's Guide Bleu for Brittany does not fail to mention Le Balp and the Bonnets Rouges in describing Carhaix and the Poher region for tourists. No doubt other tourist guides also include it for those who enjoy learning about the history of a particular region. Bretons are rightly incensed that the Prefect would censure the picture of a "Red Cap" on this sign intended to present just a few images related to the past and present of Carhaix.

Just in case all information and images related to the history of Breton resistance to French domination become banned in the future, it is a good idea to tell you a little about Sebastien ar Balp and the Revolt of the Bondon Ruz (Bonnets Rouge) before all traces are erased.

The following is a short biographical sketch of Le Balp from *Mille Bretons - Dictionnaire Biographique* (Jean-Loup Avril, 2nd edition, Les Portes du Large 2003) - my translation.

Sebastien Le Balp - Head of the insurrection of the Bonnets Rouges. Born in 1639 in Kergloff; killed September 2, 1675 at the Chateau de Tymeur in Poullaouen. He was a royal solicitor in Carhaix during the period of the Revolt against stamped papers. Intelligent, audacious and without scruples, Le Balp had doubtful professional morals. When he got out of prison he became the leader of peasants in revolt against the nobility. The revolt started in Pleyben and extended into the Montagnes Noires and the Poher region. During the months of July and August 1675 the peasants pillaged and burned chateaus and manor houses of the region. Le Balp wanted to seize the town of Morlaix. At the chateau of Tymeur he made the Marquis de Montgaillard, a former colonel, his prisoner, with the idea that he could talk him into taking charge of the insurgents marching on Morlaix. During a conversation with Le Balp, Montgaillard suddenly grabbed his sword and stabbed him. The death of the chief marked the end of the revolt. Afterwards the repression was horrific.

We can fit Le Balp into a bigger picture of history of the period with this excerpt from from The Sons of the Ermine - A History of Brittany (Jean-Pierre Le Mat. An Clochán. 1996). This history in the English language is currently being revised and hopefully will come out some time in 2006.

Bretons Against French Absolutism (1626-1720)

. . . The reign of the great King Louis XIV (1643-1715) was a calamity for Brittany. To finance the continual wars and the King's appetite for luxury, heavier and heavier taxes were imposed. At the same time, to be able to facilitate taxation, the authority of the French administration became more and more oppressive.

The prosperity of Brittany was mainly due to its international commerce. The destruction of the independent Breton navy completely ruined the country, and cut it off from the source of its prosperity during the last centuries: the shipping trade tradition.

The main Breton industries, the production of linen, for instance, were based on export. These were dramatically reduced by the edicts suppressing the corporations' liberties and the freedom of trade.

In order to safeguard Breton privileges, which were considered as national rights, the States proposed to buy the edicts, i.e., to prevent their introduction to Brittany through the payment of a ransom. Colbert, minister of Louis XIV, agreed with this proposition for the amount of 2,000,000 pounds, and the deal was signed on the 27th December, 1673.

Where were the Breton representatives to find such a sum of money? Amongst the poorest classes of society, where the people were the most numerous, the privileged of the province voted taxes which did not concern them. The pressure of taxation doubled for the Breton people at once.

At this juncture, any incident could have started a rebellion. It was Colbert himself who created it. He instituted new taxes on stamped paper, tobacco and dishes. Immediately, on the 18th of April, 1675, the Rennes inhabitants wrecked the Tobacco Office, and then the Control Office and

the Stamped Paper Office. There were fights in the streets between the rioters and troops of gentlemen. Thirty were killed or badly wounded.

On the 23rd of April riots started in Nantes where the Tobacco Office and Tin Office were ransacked. The rebellion engulfed the entire city. The royal troops reestablished order by terror. A battalion of 600 horsemen were placed in the town at the expense of the inhabitants.

In June and July 1675 the rebellion stirred in all the towns of eastern Brittany. But the revolts which erupted in western Brittany were different. It was not the taxes which were questioned, but the social order.

In May and June 1675 bands of rebels appeared in Guingamp, Chateaulin, Briec. Castles were burned and noblemen killed. By July 18,000 to 20,000 rebels controlled southwest Brittany. Codes were written, with a social program, given legitimacy with what they terms 'Armoric liberty'; it included the abolition of the nobility and popular control over the clergy.

The rebels attacked the towns of Daoulas, Landerneau, Carhaix, Pontivy. Concarneau was besieged by 4,000 peasants. Within a few weeks 200 'noble houses' were looted and wrecked by what became known as the Red Bonnets.

In the area of Carhaix, in the center of Brittany, the rebels led by Sebastian Ar Balp planned to attack the harbor of Morlaix. This strangely coincided with the movements of the Dutch fleet of Admiral Ruyter which was then cruising in the Channel.

In September 1675 Ar Balp gathered a troop of 30,000 peasants near Carhaix. He tried to convince his prisoner the Marquis of Tymeur, to lead the military operations of the Red Bonnets. But Tymeur killed him, and the troops disbanded.

The Duke of Chaulnes, Governor of Brittany, took advantage of the confusion caused by Ar Balp's death. The repression was atrocious. Hundreds of peasants were hanged. Others were sent as galley slaves. French troops initiated terror everywhere with a series of killings, rapes, arson and torture. The main leaders of the Red Bonnets were, nevertheless, able to escape to the Glenans

Islands, south of Brittany, where they were rescued by a ship from the Dutch fleet. In Rennes, hundreds of people were hanged. The 'seditious' districts were razed, and houses looted. Ten thousand soldiers were billeted there the following winter in retaliation. It is impossible to describe the beatings, killings of children, rapes, and lootings carried out by the French soldiers under the protection of their major, De Pommereu, who was at the same time in charge of the Justice administration in Brittany.

The parliament, which had been exiled to Vannes, came back to Rennes in 1689. Brittany remained silent until the death of King Louis XIV in 1715.



BRETONS IN PARIS

A New Survey

The following information was drawn from an article in the January 2006 issue of *Horizons Bretons/Dremmwel Breizh* - a special section of *Armor Magazine* (No. 432).

Results have recently become available from a study of Bretons in Paris and the Ile-de-France.* This was conducted between March and September 2005 by the Institute d'Études Politiques of Paris and the organization Paris Breton. The statistics which follow are based on some 3,000 responses received from the survey.

An estimated 900,000 people in Paris and the Ile-de-France have links to Brittany, with 297,000 having been born in one of the five Breton departments. An estimated 70,000 people living in Paris itself were born in Brittany. They are found especially in the Montparnasse area with 30,000 in the 15th arrondissement and 15,800 in the 14th arrondissement. A strong number of Bretons can also be found in the Versailles section and in two departments of the Ile-de-France: Yvelines and Hauts-de-Seine followed by Seine-Saint-Denis. These are rooted in immigration patterns of earlier years.

All five departments of Brittany have supplied the Paris area with Bretons: 23% have origins in Finistère, 20% from Côtes d'Armor, and 19% each from Morbihan, Ille et Vilaine and Loire-Atlantique. 84% of those surveyed said they always considered their primary identity to be as a Breton. 90% of those born in Brittany felt this was their primary identity, and 80% of those born outside of Brittany felt they were Breton first. 75% of those surveyed said they lived in Paris or the Ile-de-France only because of professional, schooling or familial obligations. 17% said they lived there by deliberate choice. 65% of the respondents travel to Brittany at least once every three months and 56% said they think about returning to Brittany to live (60% of those under the age of 35).

When it comes to the Breton language, 70% viewed this as a key element of Breton identity. 14% said they speak or understand Breton - a higher level than was expected. 65% of the respondents read *Ouest France* and 26% read *Le Télégramme* - the two daily newspapers of Brittany - and 61% surf Breton internet sites. 44% participate in cultural activities - concerts, festoù-noz, lectures, etc.

When it comes to economics, over 50% said they regularly consume Breton products labeled "Produite en Bretagne" and 75% agreed that they prefer to buy Breton products. 16% said they were ready to invest in Brittany and an additional 47% said they considered this a possibility.

So Bretons in Paris and the surrounding area of Ile-de-France maintain a strong sense of Breton identity and attachment to the land of their birth or the birth of their parents or grand parents.

For more details on this survey consult the following website: www.parisbreton.org

* Ile-de-France is a region that forms a ring around the city of Paris. It includes the following Departments: Val d'Oise (department number 95), Yvelines (78), Essone (91), Seine-et-Marne (77), Hauts-de-Seine (92), Seine-Saint-Denis (93) and Val-de-Marne (94)

Brittany in 1885-95 as presented in an encyclopedia of “The Earth and Its Inhabitants”

From: The Earth and Its Inhabitants: Europe: Vol. II France and Switzerland, By Élisée Reclus. (New York: D. Appleton and Company), 1885-95.

A Note to the Reader: Whether the “scholarly” work of geographers putting together a portrait of the earth’s places and peoples, or the work of travel writers sketching their impression of an exotic destination, writings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries often contain lots of stereotypes and what one could call “racial profiling” – characterizing people by hair, eye color, or body build. This presentation of Brittany of the late 1800s contains some matter-of-fact descriptions of geography as well as commonly repeated stereotypes about Breton character and “peculiarities.” – Lois Kuter

Chapter VIII – Brittany (Bretagne)

General Aspects

Brittany and Cotentin, the two peninsulas of Western France, are geologically of the same origin, and, together with Poitou and Cornwall, are the principal remaining portion of a huge granitic island, which also included Poitou and Cornwall, and was separated from the continent by an arm of the sea extending to the Vosges and the plateau of Central France. An irruption of the Atlantic severed the French portion of this ancient island from that lying beyond the Channel. The ocean incessantly lashes the broken coast of these peninsulas, but their granitic rocks are better able to resist its onslaught than is the calcareous soil of Normandy and Saintonge.

The climate and physical aspects of these two peninsulas are the same, but their political history has been very different. The Bay of St. Michel completely separates Brittany from Cotentin; and the latter being too small of extent to lead an independent life, and moreover easy of access, very soon cast in its lot with that of the population of Northern France. Brittany, on the other hand, offered a stubborn resistance to every attempt at assimilation. Thanks to its remoteness – far away from the great high-roads of nations – it was able to maintain its old customs and its Celtic tongue. The stubborn resistance offered by the Bretons to foreign encroachments was maintained for centuries. The English, though masters of Anjou and Normandy, never succeeded in firmly establishing

themselves in Brittany; and long after that province had become French it maintained its ancient customs, and down to the present day it is distinguished for many peculiarities.

Rocks, tortuous valleys, heaths, and forests separate Brittany from the rest of France, and the readiest access to it is afforded by the sea. Its many fine harbours facilitated the creation of a mercantile marine, and the frequent wars between England and France afforded an opportunity to the Bretons for exhibiting their prowess at sea. The rivalry between them and the “Bretons” on the other side of the channel fed their local patriotism, whilst frequent intercourse with other maritime districts of France created amongst them a French national feeling.

In its general features, Brittany consists of two bands of granite, gradually approaching each other in the west, the triangular space between them being occupied by ancient sedimentary formations. The crystalline, fern-clad heights to the west of the Lower Loire, known as the Sillon (“furrow”) of Brittany, may be described as the edge of a plateau rather than a chain of hills. The Vilaine has excavated itself a passage through the granite heights, which farther west from the range known as the Landes of Lanvaux (574 feet). The granites finally give place to schists, which form the Black Mountains of Brittany, thus called after the forests which formerly covered them. They culminate in the bold Menez-Hom (1,083 feet), on the peninsula of Crozon.

The northern granitic range of Brittany is far more complicated in its structure than that of the south. From the plain intersected by the canal of the Ille the country gradually rises to the heights of Le Mené (1,116 feet); but beyond these extends a vast lodge of granite, until we reach the fine range of Arrée and its sandstone peak of St. Michel (1,284 feet), the most prominent hill of Brittany. The vale enclosed between these granitic heights is traversed by several rivers, communication between which has been established by means of a canal, which connects the Lower Loire with Brest, but has now been superseded by railways.

Brittany generally gives an impression of monotonous grandeur; and Brizeux, a native poet, addresses it as the “land of granite and of oaks.” But the country is not without landscapes more pleasing to the eye – heaths and fields, shady lanes, tranquil rivulets, half-hidden lakelets, and old walls covered with ivy. On the seashore other sights greet the eye, and nothing can be more impressive than the billows of the Atlantic rushing upon the cliffs of Finistère. With a lowering sky the physiognomy of the

country is somber in the extreme, but the sun imparts to it an aspect of quiet cheerfulness impossible to describe. The Bretons themselves yield completely to these impressions, and home sickness is frequent amongst them when abroad. ...

Inhabitants

The inhabitants of Brittany differ from those of the rest of France in language, manners, and social condition. In Armorica, a remote region but little visited, ancient customs maintained themselves longer than in the more accessible parts of France, and the Druids enjoyed more power. The modern Bretons are no doubt, to a large extent, the descendant of these ancient Armoricans, but kindred Celtic tribes, driven from Great Britain through the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, settled amongst them. These new arrivals founded the towns of St. Briec, St. Malo, and others. Being superior in intelligence to the aboriginal population, they soon gained a preponderance, and Armorica became Brittany, or Little Britain. The descendants of these immigrants still differ from other Bretons. They are tall, fair, and blue-eyed, these features being most prominent of the islands of Batz and Ouessant. The Bretons living to the south of the northern coast range are less tall, brown-complexioned, and have round heads; but they, too, have dark blue eyes. Some of the inhabitants of the islands and of remote districts are said to be of a different origin. As a rule the Bretons bear a striking resemblance to the Limousins and other inhabitants of the plateau of central France. They have even been likened to the Kabyls of Algeria. Dr. Bodichon, himself a Breton, says that "the Breton of pure blood has a thick skull, a palish yellow skin, a brown complexion, black or brown eyes, a squat build, and black hair. He, like the Kabyl, is stubborn and indefatigable, and his voice has the same intonation."

The Celtic, or *Breizad*, spoken by the Bretons, is akin to Welsh. There are four dialects, those of Tréguier, Léon, Cornouaille, and Vannes; and considerable jealousies exist between those who speak them, as is proved by uncomplimentary expressions like these: "a thief like a Léonard!" "a traitor like a Trégorrois!" "a blockhead like a Vannetais!" and "a brute like a Cornouaillais!" The literature of Brittany is poor, and cannot compare in antiquity or wealth with that of Ireland or Wales. Only one weekly paper is published in Breton. French is spoken in Brest and the towns generally, and is gaining ground rapidly amongst the peasants, most of whom can converse now with a "gentleman" whom formerly they hated so much. Still the boundary between French-speaking Bretons, or "Gallots," in the east, and the

Bretons proper, has changed but little since the twelfth century. An examination of a map almost enables us to draw the line dividing the two languages. On the one side we meet with French names, or with Breton ones accommodated to French tongues: on the other, with pure Breton names only, such as begin with *aber* (mouth), *conc* (port, conch shell), *car*, *caër*, or *ker* (fortress, manor-house), *coat*, or *coët* (wood), *lan* (consecrated ground), *loc* (place, hermitage), *les* (court of justice), *mené* (hill), *mor* (sea), *penn* (head), *plé*, *pleu*, or *plou* (people, tribe), *ros* (coast), &c.

The manners of the Bretons, though peculiar in many respects, do not essentially differ from what may be met with in other remote localities of France. Brittany, in fact, presents us with a fair likeness of mediaeval France. As Michelet says, "The Bretons have only been estranged from us because they have adhered most faithfully to what we were originally; they are not much French, but very much Gaul."

Old pagan customs still survive, and the peninsula of Pontusval, in Léonais, has been known as *ar paganiz*, or the "land of the pagans," down to the present time. But there are many other parts of the province where fountains and large trees remain objects of veneration, and the mistletoe has lost none of its pristine virtue. The ancient sanctuaries have been converted into chapels, but the old divinities survive under other names. Our Lady of Hatred, the patroness of a chapel near Tréguier, is the Christian representation of a ferocious Celtic deity, whom women invoke to destroy a detested husband, and to whom children pray for the death of aged parents. St. Ives the Truthful, on the other hand, is appealed to as the defender of orphans and widows, and to redress all wrongs.

Dolmens, or cromlechs, are revered as the tombstones of powerful men, and raised stones, which no peasant passes by without crossing himself, abound throughout the country. The peasants near Auray, when suffering from rheumatism, lie down on an altar, invoking the aid of St. Etienne. Elsewhere they rub the forehead with "sacred" stones when suffering from headache. Young people still dance around the dolmens, and married couples furtively touch one of these stones in order that their posterity may prosper. The great grave-hill near Carnac, 140 feet in height, is visited by sailors' wives to pray for their husbands. In 1658 the Breton clergy solemnly declared that the devil alone could profit from food offerings placed upon these dolmens; since that time many of them have become objects of superstitious fear instead of veneration.

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