

PANTHEATRE

De: Ken Hyder [ken@hyder.demon.co.uk]
Envoyé: mardi 27 janvier 2004 12:04
À: Nick Hobbs; Chris Potts
Cc: rhodri@timewasting.net; laurie@brynderwen.co.uk; crayola@charmenko.net; pan@pantheatre.com; timpragma@compuserve.com; mikebarnes88@blueyonder.co.uk
Objet: Gaelic - Black link, in RE: Beefheart talk & Q. answer

-----Original Message-----

From: Nick Hobbs [mailto:nick@charmenko.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2004 09:00
To: Chris Potts
Cc: rhodri@timewasting.net; laurie@brynderwen.co.uk; crayola@charmenko.net; pan@pantheatre.com; ken@hyder.demon.co.uk; timpragma@compuserve.com; mikebarnes88@blueyonder.co.uk
Subject: Re: Beefheart talk & Q. answer

At 2:52 pm +0000 26.1.04, Chris Potts wrote:

Nick - I really like & can relate to your Talk. Specific points - Don't underestimate European folk traditions - there's a wild, rough, celebratory, liminal sound in there. Yeah a lot of 'source singers were old when they were recorded (imagine how more vital when younger) and a lot of revivalists were too polite musically. But, Beefheart had a copy of AL Lloyd's (Bert Lloyd) songs of seamen (whalers, fishers etc - can't remember exact title- it was on Topic) in the early/ mid sixties -and he loved it - there is a definite UK folk influence on Orange CH, and Dust Blows Frward (filtered thru' American hobo). Also European folk musics in raw state follow human (irregular) bar patterns and rhythmic intervals based on the words or the singer's own idiosyncracys & character. Peter Bellamy had an amazing singular, emotive and powerful voice. So does M.Carthy at his best. Bert Lloyd wasn't a brilliantly affecting singer but he influenced Beefheart, and he took UK folk back away from the 4/4 'factory' rhythm deliberately by injecting East European time signatures & also keeping irregularities (rubatos ?) - He passed this directly to Carthy who realizes it partic. well.

all fair and good comment - i 'm not an ethnomusicologist but i think nearly all british folk music represents a revival, i mean that the continuity was broken sometime during the industrial revolution, and also british (not sure about irish) folk seems to me to be very influenced (not to say bottled up) by protestant ideas of what singing should be

Speaking as a Pict growing up in a Scottish culture, I have to say that the broken tradition is not so true in the land of my people. But what is certainly true is that it became much more of a self-conscious performing art - with a lot of what goes with that.

I suggest listening to Dick Gaughan, the strongest folk singer to come out of Scotland. Always a rewarding experience.

The protestant influence on singing in LOMP (land of my people) is perhaps not what you might think. Gaelic psalm singing involves a precentor singing the first line of a psalm. Then the congregation improvises, usually extending each note of the original line up to six times. And each person in their own staggered time.

It's extraordinary.

It is religious spirit music with a passion which puts a lot of other church singing to shame.

Anyway it was this form which influenced black American gospel singing. Scottish plantation owners in Carolina had gaelic speaking slaves who sung in this way.

Can't find the references if you don't believe me. But this stuff was recently ratified by the search of a black musicologist who incidentally is an ex-Ellington muso.

Always easy to jump to the wrong conclusion about origins and influences.

in some ways i know about more european (especially balkan) folk than i do british but even there there seems to me a whole side to the voice which you can hear in "africa" and central asia but not (or at least very rarely) in europe (which isnt to diminish european folk music - there's much to get excited about in the robust traditions of naples and the balkans, in bulgarian, corsican and georgian polyphony, etc etc etc)

why this should be so is a big question but i suppose it has a lot to do with christianity - african and central asian vocal traditions are pagan, and the gods are not benign and the voices of those gods are not benign...

and beefheart sounds remarkably free of any christian ethics - a vocal pantheist rather

Finally - Beefheart's 'cracking' or 'hiccuping' into higher register - there is a technical term for it (I think it's in Mike Barne's book

mike - please comment

), is so unique, so emotionally affecting and human - no one does it quite like him - none of his blues forebears,

i agree though it has antecedents in the blues and country, and has phonologues(?) in lots of ethnic music

It's a small but massive part of his voice, and of 'THE voice in music (period)'. The braggadacio and macho aspects of Beefheart's voice and musical persona are juxtaposed, the humanity is completed (Yin and Yang & all points between) (Old and Young) (Vital and Frail), by that vital (as in living) vulnerability & almost involuntary, high register

with you all the way, brother!

nik

. WOW what music !!!!

I agree so much about Dagmar K. and T. Buckley as well....

Iuv Chris P.