

Into their third set of hybrid musical intelligence, 'Shorelife', Mouth Music split last year, leaving their crafted Celtic techno-funk as an influential horizon for 90's Gaelic-Celtic music. Some time before this, MM's Martin Swan discussed the relative merits of mixing ancient with post technology, other techno dilemmas and exotic authentics. Here's the initial original report.

with various Scottish Highlands and Islands folk traditions. Occasionally, it sounds, as the lilting Gaelic vocals float across the mix, discernibly African in its overall techno-texture: Scotland, Africa, although some of those textures seem as if they could only have been arrived at from people coming out of Scotland, North Sea. The second set, 'Mo Di', three years after, was a complete remodelling of priorities and horizons from that initial recording. Gone are a considerable part of the distinctive "Gaelic" vocals. In place is English, although some pieces are still in Gaelic, the sound is different. It's much harder, funkier, in approach, where it is rock, although with an overlay of Scottish Folk tradition where it isn't. And in autumn 1994, extending the journey Mouth Music are engaged in, a new set, "Shorelife" appeared. A further move away from ostensible roots and into the broad sphere of influence of post-Techno, "Shorelife" brushed off Mouth Music's past incarnations and brought a Techno accommodation to a new contemporary world music constituency.

"Where do you file Mouth Music in a record shop?" said Ian Scott of Triple Earth when I was initially finding out about the gig. "Celtic Outer Space Music," I said frivolously, though the point had been made, that it's pretty much beyond contemporary record bin categories, if inching into the weird shit rock section.

"Martin just wants to be Prince", added Scott, talking of Martin Swan, Mouth Music's moving spirit, talking of his various facilities, multi-instrumentalism and his studio-expertise. And Mouth Music appears to be a vehicle for his diverse hybridising musical interests which encompass ancient 'primitive' instruments to the latest hi-tech.

Considering the hi-tech section of the spectrum was the initial reason for making contact, and formed the weight of my questions to Martin. I was wondering how technology plays into the notion of place, region,

Mouse Mujic out of Scotland, Africa

Mouth Music arrive from Edinburgh in Brighton to play a one-off date in a dispersed spring tour schedule. Eight hours on the road, and I'm surprised they're not wiped out before they begin the evening's events.

They aren't, and they put in a fine, totally danceable funky get-down performance for the small audience to get abandoned to. This is different music to the fragile symmetries of the first album which was released as long ago as 1990. 'Mouth Music' was a radical piece of experimentation belonging to the tradition of world music hybrids which were finding voice in the late eighties, crossing shards of African sounding musics

and location for Mouth Music, who have plied their music under the sign of "Gaelic", a linguistic as much as a geographic region. Would technology dissolve boundaries and region utterly, or is there the possibility it can help to provide identity of place, say with music? Music can be part of the glue that helps express a place's sense of location to its community. Without trying to be purist about identity can regions remain whilst containing a strong regional identity yet advancing alongside the globalising, transnational tendencies of technology rather than being engulfed in this globalisation? Is it a one-way street or will some new non-geographic ambient/electronic layered regionalism