



Song Analysis

Di-rect – Free

Don't wanna know the answers
why you don't know where to go
Don't wanna know the reasons
why you don't know where you are
makin it real, makin it last
I just wanna feel...

Free, free to change the world, I'm
Flying
I'm free, free to change the world

If the sky above was fallin'
And the sun was on the wing
You could hear the angels callin'
You could even hear 'm sing
Time feels right
Gotta loose the brakes
Cause it's all about decisions
That only you can take
Makin it real, and
Makin it last
It's time to reveal
We'll get us there...

I'm free, free to change the world,
I'm flying
I'm free, free to change the world

If the world is all against you
And you've got an aching heart
You can fear the devil's eyes
You can also play his part
The time seems right
Gotta loose the brakes
Cause it's all about the future
That only you can make
Makin it real, makin it last
It's time to reveal
We'll get us there...

I'm free, free to change the world,
I'm flying
I'm free, free to change the world

Free, free to change the world
I'm free, free to change the world
Free, (the time seems right
Gotta loose the brakes)
I'm free, (the time seems right
Gotta loose the brakes) free to
Change the world

On Di-rect

In 1999, it is drummer Jamie Westland who wants to form a band. He gets some help from his father and a local musician and in a few weeks time Di-rect is a done deal. Apart from Jamie, the band consists of the following members: singer Tim Akkerman, guitar player Frans 'Spike' van Zoest and bass player Bas van Wageningen. Already after their first rehearsal they felt a connection and the base for Di-rect was born.

They recorded a demo that contains five songs and they started doing live shows. During one of their shows a Dutch radio DJ, Rob Stenders, is present and picks up their song and plays it on national radio. This resulted in the interest of managements and record companies and a few weeks later, their first bit of airplay leads to a record deal with Dino Music/ EMI.

Their first single Just the Way I Do was released in 2001 off of their gold album Discover and the band played the big festivals like Pinkpop and Lowlands in 2002. Right after their debut album was deemed a hit record they released another album Over the Moon. The album's first single was titled Adrenaline, which was also the soundtrack for the movie Adrenaline.

They released another album in 2005: All Systems Go!, but their most current album is Di-rect. It was released on March 2nd and whether it proves to be a hit record remains to be seen.

See also: www.di-rect.nl, <http://www.myspace.com/direct1>, <http://www.di-rect-fansite.nl/>

By Maaike van de Sande

Literature, An Interpretation of the Lyrics

The promisingly positive title, as well as the overall seemingly positive attitude, loses some of its strength because of the first stanza: the speaker says that he (I'll stick to "he," as the whole band consists of men) doesn't want to know why the person he addresses feels lost. Instead he "just [wants] to feel [...] free to change the world." The speaker then goes on to paint a heroic picture of how we all have to take responsibility and make decisions for the best. He continues to say that however bad things may seem, you are in control of how you design the (/your) future: "[I]t's all about the future/ that only you can make." Because the start of this song is about not wanting to get involved in someone else's personal problems, you might say this song is about how everyone has to take responsibility for their own being. You could also say the speaker is avoiding responsibility: someone he knows feels miserable, and instead of being there for that person, he prefers to feel on top of the world; free to change the world. Of course, for real, complete, freedom there is always a high price to be paid, part of which must be lack of personal relationships. But would Di-rect really be questioning the price of complete freedom in this song? It might just be my prejudice, and perhaps they actually are...

By Merel Mookhoek

Linguistics

Tim Akkerman and his fellow Di-recters are not generally known for their impeccable pronunciation of English. The main problems, especially on their first records, were either a very Dutch accent or utterances that simply weren't understandable.

In "Free", both of these phenomena occur. At times you can't really hear what the singer is trying to sing, mainly because of unclear articulation (which probably has to do with the speed of the utterances). In the line *Free to change the world* for instance, he seems to forget to pronounce *to*, thus making it sound like [fri:tʃeɪnɜ]. *Above was* is pronounced as [əbəwəs], making it sound like 'above us', plus the [w]-like sound with which the /v/ and the /w/ are replaced, is something more like a vowel than a consonant. The vowel in *brakes* is too short, which makes it difficult to hear the actual word. The vowel in *sky* sounds more like Dutch [ɛi] than English [aɪ]. *Take* in *that only you can take* sounds very weird (but note that this also is a Dutchism of another sort: it's not 'to take a decision' (cf. Dutch *beslissing nemen*), but 'to make a decision').

It's not really clear what his target accent is, British or American. In the first line, he has an American pronunciation of *answers* [æ] instead of [ɑ:]. However, in line 4, he does not pronounce the /r/ in *are*.

"Free" is a song from Di-rect's first record. Since then, several years have passed, in which the boys took English lessons, which hopefully has led to a better pronunciation.

By Gea Dreschler

Etymologies

Whereas some words in this song have no particularly interesting etymology – for instance change is 'just' derived from the Anglo-French form *chaunge*, and time (Old English *tíma*) has been in the English vocab since the 9th century, being introduced via Old Norse *tími* after the first Viking attacks – other words have a more exciting history.

Take 'answers', at present a relatively common word; everyone appears to be looking for them – except maybe Di-rect according to the lyrics – but nobody can ever find the right one. Its ancestor, the Old English *andswaru*, is cognate with the Old Saxon *antswôr* (notice the resemblance with the Present Day Dutch *antwoord*), Old Frisian *ondser*, and Old Norse *annsvar/andsvar*. All these siblings stem from the inferred Old Teutonic (Germanic) *andswâra*, which originally is a compound existing of *and-* and *swâra-*. *And-*, unlike in Present Day English (PDE), denoted *in reply* or *against*. The second part of the compound, *swâra-*, originates from the deduced Old Teutonic *swarjan*, Gothic *swaran*, and Old English *swęrian*, meaning *to affirm* or *swear*. Thus the original meaning of answer was actually a *solemn affirmation to refute a charge*, rather than just *any reply*, and this indicates that the word underwent, among others, semantic change over the years.

'Against' – also something many people seem to be these days – is etymologically interesting as well. It is a corrupted form from the genitive *aīenes*, *againes* from (PDE) again (a word with an awfully fascinating etymology as well, but there's too little space to go into it now, see the OED entry for yourself). In the late 14th century the -es suffix ceased to be syllabic and both -ens and -ains developed a parasitic -t in the southern dialects (as in *amongst-t*, *amids-t*); it was most probably confused with superlatives ending in -st. Circa 1525 this spelling became universal in literary English. In the early 16th century it again became restrictedly used as an adverb, and against was solely used as a preposition or conjunction. In PDE again can be used as an adverb, preposition, and conjunction; while against still is exclusively used as a preposition or conjunction. Conclusively, again underwent syntactic change and its corrupted descendant did not.

These are just random examples of what enthralling and intriguing histories some quite ordinary words may have. Interested in more? Check out the Oxford English Dictionary yourself at www.oed.com.

By Tessa Obbens