

Sunday, October 5, 2008

Rock Lobster

At the Trial Lawyers College, singing was encouraged and was everywhere, some of it good, some of it mediocre at best, and some of it drowning out the rest of the conversation too much. A good point was made that by doing more singing, we are better at getting our words and arguments not only past our lips, but in a full voice that carries the message where it needs to go. The passion of singing needs to translate into the passion of speaking in court. One of my favorite songs is the B-52s "Rock Lobster". The song's words do not seem to have much of a meaning. However, the song very much captures the time period, the type of music that was emerging and continuing for several years, and a way of dancing that took little else than hopping around. It was a late Seventies remake of the late Fifties' "Shout" by the Isley Brothers, at least with the parallels to everyone getting down to the ground at the respective commands of "A little bit softer now" and "Down, down, down" followed by "A little bit louder now" and, with "Rock Lobster" an increase in the music volume. Each song moves very much ahead, rather than meandering about. Unlike most of the top music hits, I never got tired of "Rock Lobster". "Rock Lobster" now is over thirty years old. For better or worse, the band went from a much more gritty and somewhat off-key early version (the off-key part possibly was intentional, considering that this was just a month before releasing their first album) followed by much tighter versions. Here are some video links to the song's performance: 1978 in Atlanta (where Fred Schneider reminds the crowd that servers work for tips); another early version; this polished version that looks made for MTV; and this version two decades after the first performance. Jon Katz

Posted by Jon Katz in Persuasion at 00:00