

Anthem

A Project by Beth Derbyshire with collaboration by Ulrike Haage.

Artist's notes on the evolution to making Anthem

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Background on the making of the Anthem.

Derbyshire first thought of *Anthem* in 2001 whilst undertaking research at the Glasgow Centre for Political Song, and later walking along the Scottish/English border and coastline. *(Image 1, Scottish coast)* Derbyshire had been researching the Anthems of the British Isles for a work she was developing with a deaf choir which explored collective voice and political song. *(Image 2, Deaf Choir)* Derbyshire felt that these Anthems didn't represent current notions of citizenship. She wanted to make a new visual and aural "anthem" that explored current ideas of citizenship and our cultural relationship to landscape by meshing together the lyrics of the existing anthems. When filming the Scottish/English border engulfed in fog mist, "(she) was struck by the idea of blurred borders and nationalities. This was compounded by the fact that the boundary of the British Isles fluctuates with the tide and that the coast is a place of departures and arrivals.

(Image 3, Derbyshire filming the border)

Derbyshire and Haage first met in Brussels in 2004 where Derbyshire was exhibiting "*God Save the Queen, I want to be Free*", the work with the deaf choir she had been researching in 2001. Here in Brussels Derbyshire and Haage first discussed Anthem, this was to be the first of many conversations that would be had in different parts of the world.

Nick Slater, a curator for The Litchfield Arts Festival commissioned what would become the third film of Anthem. At this point Anthem was a single film to be shown in St Johns Chapel, a 14th century church in Litchfield. This seemed particularly fitting as the last shot of the entire work is of Holy Island in Scotland, which is not only close to the border but also has an ancient spiritual heritage stretching back to the 6th Century. The earliest recorded name for Holy Isle was Inis Shroin which is old Gaelic for "island of the water spirit". Later the idea of the etymology behind land names would come into the libretto of part two of Anthem.

As the initial libretto was quoting from national Anthems, permissions had to be acquired from many sources such as the Irish Government. Derbyshire said at the time when in conversation with Nick Slater "*Together we wrote the words last summer (2005) just after the London bombings. The papers were full of commentary. We both felt that this was the right time to write the words....The fact the Ulrike is not British (Haage is German) had added a really important layer of meaning.*

For more information on Beth Derbyshire please go to: <http://www.bethderbyshire.com>

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By this I mean that Ulrike is looking at these songs and notions of nationality from an outsiders point of view and with impartiality. This reinforces the fact that this work is about global notions of citizenship.”

(Image 4 and 5, Ulrike Haages Score).

The initial film was first shown during the 2006 World Cup and with the 2010 World Cup on the horizon, this provides an interesting context in which to look at *Anthem's* references to nationality. During the world cup we often see a separation of nations. The game of football presents an encapsulated perspective on nation, as for an hour and half at a time, a piece of land and the surrounding terraces become an arena where national teams battle for position.

The film was then included in the Oberschwaben Contemporary Art Triennial in Friedrichshafen called *Nothing to Declare*, a phrase we encounter at every border. The exhibition was set in three countries, Germany, Switzerland and Austria all of whose borders align Lake Constance. *Nothing to Declare* addressed borders, and how they raise questions of identity.

“To which region, country or city do we feel we belong? What really constitutes the identity of a city or a town, a country or a region? How are the borders between regions or cultures constructed?” Press Release from *Nothing to Declare*.

Barney Drabble, one of the curators of *Nothing to Declare* wrote of *Anthem*:

“The words of the four anthems that appear to both represent, and simultaneously undermine, the concept of the ‘United Kingdom’, are selectively shuffled and amalgamated to form a new hymn assembled by the two collaborators and set to an eerie electronic score, with nine voices, by Haage. The resultant anthem is re-imagined as a conversation between the four parts of a nation, speaking of conflict as well as union.

Derbyshire’s film takes us on a tour of the country, tracing the rural border-regions and deserted coasts in the early morning hours. Her camera documents and presents the mountains, hills and valleys as an indefinite, ultimately untameable wilderness. The delineations and borderlines of nationhood apparently lose themselves here in the mist and rain, countered by the words of these ancient anthems, with their call to the hearts and blood of their citizens and the crags and streams of their land.”

Derbyshire and Haage were invited by Barney Drabble to come and talk about the development of *Anthem*. It was there, on those borders that they had a fundamental conversation about the themes and libretto's that were evolving in *Anthem*.

(Image 6, Beth Derbyshire working notes).

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Collaboration and Conversation in relation to Anthem.

Anthem has been seven years in the making, and is a work that has evolved through true collaboration and conversations with a range of people that Derbyshire has encountered along the way from shepherds to park keepers, to artistic colleagues. (*Image 7, Shepherd on Scottish Border*). In conversation with Nick Slater, Derbyshire said of Anthem, "Anthem has thrown up many issues and the collaboration with Ulrike has been a very meaningful exchange and communication."

When filming on the UK borders Derbyshire was helped by shepherds who took her to parts of the actual borders only navigable by small hill trucks normally used for transport of stray sheep. These men who are in a sense, keepers of the land told her about their experiences and histories related to that landscape. On the northern Irish border Derbyshire became engaged in conversation with the owner of the B and B where she was staying. Derbyshire heard a story of how the hotelier's neighbour had been shot in the head on his property during the troubles, how they had heard the gun go off and had gone next door to see what had happened only to discover the horrific outcome.

When Derbyshire went to a remote part of New Foundland on a residency to film part two of Anthem. She encountered a small community in a former fishing village where she befriended Bruce and his wife Barb, Bruce was a park keeper and had lived in this remote part of New Foundland all of his life knowing the territory inside and out. Bruce told Derbyshire about Bruce also took Derbyshire to parts of the park that were inaccessible to most people. Derbyshire wrote home in an email to friends:

"My new friends are Barb and Bruce, who have lived here all their lives with their son. They also have a pig, Pork Chop, 5 cows, seven hens and a vegetables garden which feeds everybody including the neighbours. I left with several lettuces last night! All their livestock end up in the freezer and they shoot a moose each year. They put everything in jars, moose, caribou and mackerel and live almost entirely of the land. Barb has made a life size fibreglass moose, which is at the entrance to her house. It's a bit bonkers but they are really nice and always laughing." (image 8, Woody Point High Street)

It was now 2007 and Beth Derbyshire met David Buckland. They had a pivotal conversation about climate change and migration patterns. It became apparent that there was a synergy between a line of enquiry that Derbyshire had been exploring with Anthem and the Cape Farewell creative mission. It emerged that while Anthem was concerned with nation and borders, our borders are useless in the face of the weather crisis.

Derbyshire was invited to join the 2007 Cape Farewell expedition to the High Arctic. Derbyshire joined a crew of 20 artists and scientists and manning her shifts through force nine storms and icy seas in previously uncharted seas, sailed the 100 year old schooner Noorderlicht, from Svalbard to the east Coast of Greenland, to the north coast of Iceland. Derbyshire wrote at the time:

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“ Our passage to Greenland was extraordinary. A necessary exorcism out of urban life to ready us for the incredible sights we were yet to see. I had decided to read Heart of Darkness, which seemed very apposite material, a kind of double whammy of darkness out there and in my head. We zipped up, buttoned up and clipped on for ice watch as we encountered lumpy unpredictable seas, variable cold winds and small bombs of ice, a pretty scary ice symphony played out against the hull. I didn't feel that my organs were my own with my body in perpetual motion.”

My companions are a really wonderful group of individuals. In the face of seasickness and some really frightening moments humour and sensitivity prevailed. Liam in his full-length olive thermal undies looking a little Buck Rogers and scaring the hell of out of Dallas on deck will be an everlasting memory. We barely know each other yet within two days of meeting were throwing up in front of each other in all but our underwear!”

(Image 9, The Noorderlicht surrounded by ice)

During the journey to Greenland, the 2007 voyage encountered the extremes of the weather and the direct experience of danger that climate change could present. Derbyshire observed in her blog:

“The arctic is the most sensitive place on the planet to measure climate change as it is made largely of ice. As we started our voyage out of Svalbard we stopped in a moraine strewn Fjord which should have been covered in ice and snow. The Arctic is one of our last wildernesses, fast becoming a wasteland. The mountains newly exposed by the melt ironically looked like rusting wrecks. The ice-burbs that surround the ship carcasses of their former glory. We endured nine days at sea as the ice had locked and shut Greenland. It shouldn't be here now, it should be much further north. Our turbulent journey around the ice to get into Greenland in itself a chilling illustration of the advance of climate change.”

When Derbyshire underwent the 2007 voyage one of the last pieces of news that the group heard before their departure was that the Canadians and Russians were arguing over who had the right to the Northern seas through proof of ownership of the continental shelf. Hans Island was also under dispute between the Danes and the Canadians. As the schooner made its slow progress towards Greenland Derbyshire commented:

“On board I find a book “The place names of Svalbard”. Svalbard (the furthest point north with human occupancy) comprises of all the islands and groups of islands of which Norway acquired sovereignty by treaty in 1920. Three hundred years of exploration (from all over the world) and maps drawn under harsh conditions in many different languages resulted in many places having more than one name. This leads to utter confusion. The introduction goes on to explain, “ We had no model to work with. For no other country in the world has been the area of operation of so many nations, and no other country has been so frequently visited and thus exploited and has remained a no mans land during such a long era as Svalbard. Therefore no legitimate authority ever took care of the place names.” The purpose of the book was to establish the final

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place names of the region. They could be anything from the name of the person that discovered the place, to names of sentiment, or names associated with the local environment.

It strikes me as we roll on towards oblivion with nations claiming land under the ice and politicians performing PR stunts on islands in dispute that we too have no model to work from. One thing is for sure that we will have to find a common language from which to tackle the most important issue of our time. Staking claims on "land" is futile in the face of our dramatically changing weather system."

On the voyage Derbyshire assisted scientists from the UK's National Oceanography Centre, as they monitored the behaviour of the West Spitsbergen Current and the East Greenland current and observed the movement of polar and glacial ice. During the seventeen-day sail Derbyshire was struck by just how threatened the polar region is:

"As I watch the scientists take the temperature of the Gulf Stream with surprising and shocking results I am aware that in the same moment that I am both experiencing the absolute beauty of this region and witnessing it disassemble before my eyes."

Context of Anthem being filmed.

Derbyshire captured footage of extraordinary diminishing beauty on this voyage and these images are presented for the first time at the Eden Project this November. We can travel all over the world because of air travel and ironically it would seem that this combined with the progress of industry is the very thing that is warming the planet up to dangerous degrees. Currently there are no air strips or oil platforms in the Arctic but what will happen when the ice melts and people can drill for oil? Ironically industry will prevail in an area opened up by climate change through industrial activity itself.

Derbyshire travelled by wind and boat to the Arctic and came back with footage that may become a geographical and historical document, providing a window for people to see the last great wilderness as it disappears, many of us will never see it. Derbyshire concluded after a days filming:

"I am here to make a film, part of a trilogy of musical films that explore ideas around nationality by making notional anthems that are both aural and visual. Migration due to climate change has already begun and will continue to accelerate. I wanted to explore my exploration of these ideas in the arctic, a place without borders, a kind of no mans land or is it? I can see from the amount of cameras on the boat that we are rapacious in our appetite for the Arctic, as am I. I realised as I am filming the sublime that I am kind of shooting an ad. The Arctic has become a product and more so as it is increasingly contested site."
(Images 10 and 11, Derbyshire filming onboard The Noorderlicht)

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Anthem at Eden as part of the Cape Farewell collaboration.

(Images 12, installation of the screens at Eden with rigging. Images 13 -16 stills from the trilogy)

Anthem is a work that is concerned with one of the most important and public issues of our time, one that concerns all of us. *Anthem* is largely funded by public money and will be launched at Eden and indeed into the metaphorical public realm. It seems appropriate that initially the original film was shown in a church and the premiere of the piece completed and set in a garden, both places of community. The Arts Council and the Arts have always endeavoured to provide a legacy for future generations and *Anthem* attempts to do the same through its message about our cultural and historical relationship to landscape

Presenting *Anthem* at Eden in the Mediterranean biome which is in a sense an international library of plants positions this work in a landscape constructed by humans that is a representation of place. Eden is an iconic platform from which to launch *Anthem* as its very name carries the idea of newness, and it is a place that celebrates our connection with landscape. Eden is in a sense a museum of plants and climate change may result in the loss some of these plant species in their original habitat. It is likely that we may lose landscapes all over the world. Many people will never be able to reach those landscapes. Placing *Anthem* a film that part documents a disappearing landscape at Eden provides a combined experience and historical legacy of foreign and disintegrating landscapes. Whilst in the early days of colonialism collecting from other countries may have been regarded as trophies now these items become tributes to their place of origin and reflect how people and plants have migrated throughout the world.

Anthem is a work that explores the way in which we inhabit the earth, our use and assumed ownership of land, the impact we are making on the global environment. The piece asks us to reassess and reimagine our relationship to the earth.

Cape Farewell and the Eden Project

“*We have cracked our skies and soiled the earth:*” Beth Derbyshire’s first blog on the voyage to Greenland.

Artist’s notes on Anthem.

Anthem is a trilogy of short musical landscape films with a powerful choral component. *Anthem* will be sung live by Stile Antico, a London based ensemble, to the films projected onto three screens that are suspended amongst the foliage in the Mediterranean biome. *(Image 17 Screens in the biome).*

Anthem explores notions of land, place and nation, through a collaboration of internationally acclaimed artists and organisations. *Anthem* assembles ideas around nationality, identity and language using the symbols of landscape and song to explore our cultural relationship to landscape. Song and landscape have long been associated with expressions on nation. *Anthem* borrows from sources such as national *Anthems*, ancient land names and etymology.

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Anthem captures strata's from wide ranging cultural and natural settings, to explore the connections between people and landscape through balancing components of voice, music, word and image. *Anthem* is a truly international project; shot on the borders of the UK, New Foundland and the Arctic, the music composed and recorded in Santa Fe and Europe. Untouched landscape is increasingly becoming rare, it is now often locked up in national parks or has a very high price tag attached to it. Given both current environmental and political issues, the image of landscape is part of the modern zeitgeist. To compliment this, Haage's extraordinary music creates an incredible environment using the voice as instrument.

Anthem begins with **Evocations**, which is set in the rocks and tablelands of Newfoundland. We navigate some of the oldest rocks in the world, which are in a sense the foundations of the earth. In the film nothing is fixed by using a fluid and soft editing style. Sequences of rocks merge to suggest a land, which is forming. With this in mind the libretto starts with sounds that are half words to suggest an evolving language. The sounds develop into words that begin with the names for the old super continents so referencing ancient time. The libretto encompasses geological phrases, which illustrate through scientific inquiry our attempt to understand the processes of nature.

Part two **Nuna** (Inuit dialect for earth) is set in the arctic. The film concentrates on the slipped ice from the North Pole, and is largely set upon the surface of the sea. The Arctic is in effect our last great wilderness fast becoming a wasteland. The libretto draws on the etymology of country names for its content. Set against the backdrop of a place that is for the large part without land, Nuna focuses on ideas connected to naming and land claims. In a sense these phrases such as 'land of the light' as well as being evocative descriptions of place, give us a sense of the world before the naming of countries and claiming of land. This idea is further emphasised by editing the footage using slivers of film that open up, slowly revealing the landscape, it is as if we are looking at the landscape for the first time.

Part Three, **Anthem** is set in the UK and depicts the borders of Britain through an amalgamation of *Anthems* that represent the different constituent parts of Britain and images of unidentifiable landscapes of the British borders. The United Kingdom is made up from a series of islands; its borders are marked by the coastline, a constantly moving line marked by the tide. Using this notion as a visual vehicle the film is comprised of murky border-scapes whose delineations and borderlines are dissolved through mist and rain, in effect erasing divisions between the countries which make up the UK.

Anthem used the structure of a trilogy to allow a focus to develop through notions of land, place and nation and as each film finishes we are presented with an afterimage to suggest this focus, a faint line to suggest a horizon, a subtle rendition of the word boundless to suggest place and a flickering map-coordinate to suggest a border.

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Evocations takes us back to a time before land masses were formed and draws our attention to the complex relationship between modern land masses and those of the past, for example how modern countries would have once been connected to another.

Nuna is set in the far north and in a now contested landscape. The idea of place is evoked as the words behind county names are set against a constantly moving landscape, a kind of no mans land that has become an intensely political site as countries claim their stakes.

Anthem concludes with societal words that people have sung over hundreds of years thus referencing a traditional expression of nation as these words locate ideas of community, land and history. The libretto is lifted from the national *Anthems* of Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England. However **Anthem** is not an advocacy of British nationalism but reconfigures the words to offer new meanings with a chorus that urges us to think again, do we need to rethink how nationality is defined and represented.

We live in an era when many nations are becoming increasingly fractured and one that has witnessed the development of new states and countries. The equation of nationalism and identity is a worldwide issue and a dynamic that is constantly changing as a result of human migration, something that is part of our global cultural heritage especially as our climate is changing. The fact that the modern passport is less than one hundred years old illustrates new patterns of travel and resettlement. This would suggest we live in a time in which we need to re-address our perceptions of nationality and citizenship, perhaps by challenging and updating the values we associate with these subjects. Anthem takes these ideas as its cue by inviting us to consider these timely observations through powerful symbolism.

Our relationship with landscape and nature has always been explored and celebrated through the arts and through myths. Now, more than ever, as many systems change around us, be that physical, societal or political, we need to understand our connection to each other, to the land. This work continues the long, borderless human tradition of setting voice in landscape, whilst using the media of its time.

Beth Derbyshire, 2009

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Anthem Libretto's (Derbyshire Haage 2009:

Evocations, Part 1

Music :written for: theremin | 3 voices | inside piano percussion | drums

VERS 1, 1 – 3 Voices: *improvising | spoken word*

Hadaikum 1

Magma

Theia 2

Moon

1 – 3 Voices: *sung chord*

Earth shine

VERS 2, 1 – 3 Voices: *improvising | spoken word*

Atmos phaira 3

Panthalassa 4

Rodinia

Pangea

Laurasia

Gondwana

VERS 3, 1 – 3 Voices: *spoken word | clear words*

Aion 5 after Aion

Continental drifts

Mantle Plume

Metamorphoses

40 Trillion Watts

VERS 4, 1 – 3 Voices: *musically spoken words | superposed*

The land rose slowly from the sea

Stained with minerals

Dark shales

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Nuna, Part 2

Music: Written for: 1 voice | inside piano percussion | violoncello

VERS 1, 1 Voice:

Land of the Light
Free
Land of Many Waters
Land of Ice
Island of the Moon
Be White
Be Red
Be Green
Be Blue
Be Black

VERS 2, 1 Voice:

Land of the Long White Cloud
Be
Land of the Pure
Shine
Land of Thunder
Boundless
Beauty has a sacred trust
Be White
Be Red
Be Green
Be Blue
Be Black

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Anthem, Part 3

Music: Nine voices, Electronic landscape.

VERS 1

The ancient land of my fathers is dear to me (Welsh)
The hills are bare now (Scottish)
In valley green, on towering crag (Irish)

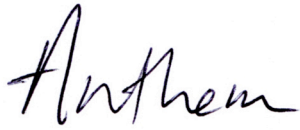
VERS 2

Some have come
From a land beyond the wave
Sworn to be free (Irish)

Wild are the winds to meet you,
Kind as the love that shines (Scotland the brave)
How charming still seems
The music that flows in her streams (Welsh)

VERS 3

Land of my high endeavour (Scotland the brave)
Now feel the blood a-leaping (Scotland the brave)
High may your proud standards gloriously wave (Scotland the brave)



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Artist Biographies

Beth Derbyshire holds a BA from Ruskin, Oxford and an MFA from Chelsea College of Art. Derbyshire has exhibited widely, nationally and internationally. Recently, Derbyshire presented *Together*, a three dimensional laser light projection as part of the Gulf Art Fair in Dubai. She then opened two installations for the Montréal Biennale, a solo show with Tatar Gallery in Toronto and completed a commissioned project *Objects with Secrets*, for Hermès, Paris which opened at Selfridges in London.

Her past projects include the extraordinary city-wide performance and exhibition *Message* (London 2005) presented by the National Maritime Museum, Platform for Art and drawn together in a book published by Thames and Hudson and *Babel*, a multi-channel video installation for the Sharjah Biennale, Arab Emirates, 2003. She also participated in *East International*, Norwich, *Mirror* at the Museum of Installation, Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery and twice as part of the *New Visions* programme at the National Maritime Museum. Abroad at the *O to 1* video show, Brera Institute, Milan which then toured to Tokyo, *Gasterbeiter* at the 2YK Gallery, Berlin, the Sharjah Biennale, *EV+A International Ireland* (1998, 1999 and 2000), as well as part of the special projects at the Brussels Art Fair (2004) and Arco, Madrid (2005).

Derbyshire's work has drawn extensive press coverage and major profile pieces, from amongst others *The Independent*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Evening Standard*, *Art Monthly*, *W Magazine*, *British Vogue*, *The Art Newspaper* and been broadcast live (including) the BBC, ITN and Sky.

Further information: www.bethderbyshire.com (*Image 18 and 19 Portrait of Beth Derbyshire*)

Ulrike Haage is an internationally acclaimed pianist, composer, producer and director of her own radio productions, she originally studied music and music therapy in Hamburg. In 2004 Ulrike Haage finally finished her instrumental album *Sélavy*, a collection of compositions that have arisen from her interest in the way acoustic instruments can interact with the world of electronic sound. Haage has worked with a huge range of artists, in 1989 she founded with Katharina Franck *The Rainbirds*. She has written scores for the theatrical music group *Stein* and worked together with some of the leading directors all over Germany. Her work on stage is characterised by an incredible intensity and professionalism and since 1999 has increasingly concentrated on developing a unique style that fuses poetry and music into a single language. In a work called *Reise, Toter* – a joint project with poet Durs Grünbein – she created a powerful density of words and sounds.

“... For 20 years now Ulrike Haage is surely one of the most diverse musicians and composers of our times and she is working consequently beyond all categories ... And for exactly this reason, for her outstanding and truly versatile life-work that permanently reinvents itself, she received the 2003 Albert-Mangelsdorff-Award. ... Markus Müller, Nov. 2003 And Meret Becker once put it like this: “Ulrike Haage is one of the most artistic and imaginative musicians in Germany. She lends a certain ethereal charm to music.”

Further information: www.u-version.com (*Image 20 and 21, Portrait of Ulrike Haage*)

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