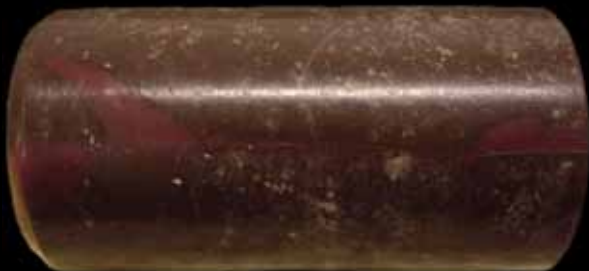


R R B V E E T N S O A



John Harvey

Ddw y flynedd cyn canmlwyddiant Diwygiad 1904, derbyniodd Archif Sgrin a Sain Cymru (sydd yn y Llyfrgell Genedlaethol, Aberystwyth) silindr ffonograffig oedd yn honni bod yn recordiad o arweinydd carismataidd y diwygiad, Evan Roberts (1878–1951). Roedd yn cynnig y posibilrwydd cyfareddol y byddai'n datgelu darlun mwy cyflawn o'r dyn. Roeddem gennym ni snyiad sut roedd yn edrych o ffotograffau ohono, ac roeddem ni'n gwybod am ei snyiadau o'r hyn yr ysgrifennodd a'r hyn a adroddwyd am yr hyn a ddywedodd. Ond doedden ni ddim yn gwybod sut roedd yn swnio – ei lofnod lleisiol: ansawdd a chymeriad y llais oedd wedi hudo miloedd o bobl yn ystod y deffroad crefyddol. Ond doedd hi'n ddim rhywyddach i'r crair clywadwy hwn ildio ei gynnwys nag y byddai i ddrych drylliedig gynnig darlun cywir. Roedd y silindr wedi torri'n 11 darn. Ar ôl cael ei atgyweirio'n ofalus gan Michael Khanchalian, deintydd ac atgyweiriwr silindrau cwyr o America, roedd modd ei chwarae unwaith eto. Yn erbyn sain ymwithiol cliciau a chraciau'r cwyr, a rhythm y nodwydd wrth iddi wthio ei ffordd drwy'r rhychau troellog, mae modd dirnad lleisiau bregus Roberts a chôr bach o gantorion gwrywaidd. Paratowyd trosglwyddiad digidol o'r recordiad mewn stiwdio sain yn Los Angeles, California a'r Llyfrgell Brydeinig yn Llundain. Dyma'r fersiwn sy'n sail i fy nghyfres i o weithiau.

Pan glywais am drwsio'r silindr cwyr, cododd dau gwestiwn yn fy meddwl: Sut fyddai'r silindr wedi swnio pe bai wedi bod modd ei chwarae yn ei gyflwr toredig? Ac mewn sawl ffordd wahanol

fyddai hi wedi bod yn bosibl ailosod y silindr? Yn y byd diriaethol, mae'r ddau ymholiad yn amherthnasol: does dim modd chwarae silindr cwyr sydd wedi torri, a dim ond mewn un ffordd mae'n bosibl i'r darnau ddod yn ôl at ei gilydd. Fodd bynnag, taniodd y cwestiynau hyn fy awydd i ymwneud â'r arteffact yn ei gyflwr toredig. Roeddwn i am greu undodau newydd allan o anhrefn y silindr cyn iddo gael ei ludo at ei gilydd, a fyddai'n archwilio'r estheteg sain a'r graddau roedd yr arteffact yn agored i bosibiliadau. Yn y byd digidol, mae hyn yn gwbl ddechradwy. Mae'r ymwneud hwn wedi rhyddhau snyiadau ac arwyddocâd nad ydynt yn amlwg pan glywir y recordiad yn gyfan. Yn unol â fy egwyddor o ymarfer wrth greu delweddau gweledol, pennir y modd y defnyddir y deunydd ffynhonnell, cyhyd â bo hynny'n bosibl, gan ei nodweddion cynhenid a'i amgylchiadau anghynhenid. O ganlyniad, mae'r prosesau a'r canfyddiadau sy'n cyfrannu at fy ymyriad â'r silindr yn codi'n llwyr o gynnwys a natur y cyfrwng, ynghyd â chyd-destun a diwylliant ei greu.

Mae teitl y gwaith celf –

R R B V E Æ T N S O A

– yn deillio o enw'r diwygiwr. Mae'r geiriau wedi'u darnio gyda threfn a gorweddad y llythrennau wedi'u hafloynyddu i greu analog testunol ar gyfer darnau anhrefnus y silindr a fu unwaith yn gyflawn. Nid oes modd ynganu enw'r gwaith celf, ac mae'n amhosibl, yn yr un modd, chwarae sain y silindr yn ei gyflwr darniog. Rhennir y gwaith i gynyfer o ddarnau ag sydd o

ddernynnau posibl sy'n goroesi. Mae teitl pob darn, unwaith eto, yn ddatgymaliad o'r enw 'Evan' a 'Roberts' ar ffurf anagram. Gyda'i gilydd, mae'r dynodiadau yn haniaethau sydd drwy hap yn ymdebygu i eiriau sydd â chysylltiadau cerddorol, llenyddol a chelfyddydol. Yn eu tro maent yn orchmynion ac yn anodiadau, yn feiriadaethau ac yn ddisgrifiadau, yn gyfeiriadau at fywyd a phersonoliaeth Roberts ac yn gyfeiriadau at ffenomena'n gysylltiedig â'r diwygiad ei hun. Nid oes teitl i'r deuddegfed darn enwol. Fe saif, fel bedd y Milwr Anhysbys, dros yr holl ddarnau a gollwyd pan dorwyd y silindr, ac fe'i cynrychiolir, yn docenistaidd, â chasgliad o 'dawelwch' cymharol – hynny yw, y darnau hynny o'r recordiad pan yw Roberts a'r côr yn dawel, gyda dim ond arwyneb y silindr i'w glywed.

Mae pob darn sain yn dechrau'n weledol, gyda siâp un o'r 11 dernyn. Caiff amlinell y dernyn ei lunio â llaw ar fwrdd lluniadu electroacwstig – blwch siambr arbennig yn cynnwys microffon. Caiff sain y lluniadu ei recordio a'i dolennu, ac yn olaf, ei haddasu'n gyweiraidd drwy hidlydd i roi iddi nodweddion sain recordiad silindr cwyr. Mae natur gylchol ailadroddus y lluniad sain yn dynwared y silindr cwyr yn cychdroi. Mae'r samplau eraill a ddefnyddir yn y cyfansoddiadau yn cynnwys adrannau a olygwyd ac a ddadleolwyd o'r fersiwn digidol o gynnwys sain y silindr. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys sain arwyneb, a geiriau, cymalau a brawddegau unigol wedi'u cymryd o anerchiad Roberts a chanu'r côr. Mae'r gweithiau sain-celf

yn estyn ymhellach y broses a ddefnyddiwyd gyda thechnolegau i recordio a chwarae ar lais Roberts. Mae'r deunydd sain wedi'i ail-recordio, ei aildrefnu, ei ailgyfansoddi, ei ailfynegi, ei gyfartalu, ei samplu a'i drawsgrifio. Yn y modd hwn, caiff y silindr ei ddarnio unwaith eto. Caiff y detholiadau llais eu hailadrodd, eu troi am yn ôl, eu harafu, eu cyflymu, eu torri a'u bleisio, eu trawsosod a'u hidlo. Mae hyd pob darn o fewn uchafswm rhychwant silindr cwyr o ddechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif (tua 4 munud).

Gwrthrych gwag yw silindr cwyr (mae ar agor ar y ddau ben); cyfrwng yn hytrach na chynhwysydd, a thrywyddo mae'r gorffennol a'r presennol, realiti a'i ddiwygiadau, yn llifo ac yn uno. Yn yr un modd, mae'r gyfres hon o weithiau'n ymateb cyfoes a dychmygus i ddata hanesyddol – cyfres o adluniadau damcaniaethol, gwrth-ffeithiol neu estyniadau ffugiol o'r ffaith sydd wedi'i amgodio'n seiniol. Mae'r gweithiau sain-celf yn addasu'r cynnwys clywadwy, nodweddion y broses recordio, a chyflwr ffisegol y silindr fel modd o adalw a chyd-asio, yn acwstig, agweddau o fywgraffiad Roberts a hanes y diwygiad – er mwyn datblygu cyfres o fyfyrnodau ar y ffynhonnell sy'n ennyn dealltwriaeth a theimladau. Drwy wneud hyn, mae'r gweithiau'n gwyso profiadau, digwyddiadau, emosiynau, beiriadaethau ac arwyddocâd cysylltiedig, sydd fel arall yn anhygyrch, neu nad oes modd eu mynegi drwy ddogfennau gweledol a thestunol.

John Harvey, Mawrth 2013

Two years before the centenary of the 1904 Welsh revival, the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales (based at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth) received a phonographic cylinder that claimed to be a recording of the revival's charismatic figurehead, Evan Roberts (1878–1951). It offered the tantalizing possibility of providing a more rounded profile of the man. We knew what he looked like from photographs, and we knew his ideas from what he wrote and was reported as having said. But we didn't know what he sounded like – his vocal signature: the tone and character of the voice that had captivated thousands of people during the religious awakening. But this audible relic could no more surrender its content than a shattered mirror return a faithful image. The cylinder had been broken into 11 extant pieces. After a painstaking repair by Michael Khanchalian, an American dentist and wax cylinder restorer, it was capable of being played once again. Against the insistent noise of surface clicks and crackles, and the rhythm of the stylus as it ploughs through the spinning furrows, the feeble voices of Roberts and a small choir of male singers are discernible. A digital transfer of the recording was prepared by a sound studio in Los Angeles, California and the British Library, London. This version forms the basis of my suite of works.

On hearing about the repaired wax cylinder, two questions occurred to me: What might the cylinder have sounded like if it could have been

played in its fractured condition? And in how many different ways could the cylinder have been reassembled? In the material realm, both interrogations are redundant: one cannot play a broken wax cylinder, and its parts can fit back together in only one way. Nevertheless, these questions ignited my desire to engage with the artefact in its state of ruin. I wanted to create new unities out of the cylinder's pre-glued disorder that would explore the audio aesthetic and the artefact's openness to possibilities. In the digital realm this is entirely feasible. The engagement has liberated ideas and significance that are not evident when the recording is heard intact. In line with my principle of practice when making visual images, the manipulation of the source material is determined, as far as possible, by its intrinsic characteristics and extrinsic circumstances. Accordingly, the processes and concepts that inform my intrusion into the cylinder arise solely from the content and nature of the medium, and the context and culture of its creation.

The title of the artwork – **R R B V E E T N S O A** derives from the revivalist's name. The words are broken up and the letters' sequence and orientation disrupted to create a textual analogue for the disordered pieces of the once intact cylinder. The name of the artwork is unpronounceable, just as the sound of the cylinder, in its state of fragmentation, is unplayable. The work is divided into as many pieces as there are possible extant fragments. Each

piece's title is, again, a disarticulation of the words 'Evan' and 'Roberts' in the form of an anagram. Collectively, the designations are abstractions that fortuitously resemble proper words with musical, literary, and art associations. They are variously commands and encouragements, criticisms and descriptions, references to Roberts' life and personality, and allusions to phenomena associated with the revival itself. The notional twelfth piece has no title. It stands, like a tomb for the Unknown Soldier, for all the pieces that were lost when the cylinder was broken, and is represented, tokenly, by a compilation of relative 'silence' – that is, of those parts of the recording when Roberts and the choir are quiet, and one can hear only the cylinder's surface.

Each sound piece begins visually, with the shape of one of the 11 fragments. The outline of a fragment is traced manually on an electro-acoustic drawing board – a bespoke box-chamber containing a microphone. The sound of the drawing is recorded and looped and, finally, modified tonally through a filter to give it the sonic characteristics of a wax cylinder recording. The cyclical nature of the sound-drawing's reiteration mimics the revolution of the wax cylinder. The other samples used in the compositions comprise sections edited and dislocated from the digital version of cylinder's audio content. They include surface noise, and single words, phrases, and sentences taken from Roberts' homily and the choir's singing. The sound-art works further extend the process by

which Roberts' voice has been subjected to audio recording and playback technologies. The audio material is re-recorded, reordered, recomposed, rearticulated, equalized, sampled, and transcribed. In this way, the cylinder is fractured once again. The voice extracts are variously repeated, reversed, slowed down, speeded up, cut up and spliced, overlaid, and filtered. The duration of each piece is within the maximum time-span of an early-twentieth century wax cylinder (approximately 4 minutes).

A wax cylinder is hollow (open at both ends), a conduit rather than a container, through which past and present, reality and its revisions, course and merge. Accordingly, the suite of works is a contemporary and imaginative response to historical data – a series of conjectural, counterfactual reconstructions or fictive extensions of the sonically encoded fact. The sound-art works adapt the audible content, the characteristics of the recording process, and the physical condition of the cylinder as a means of evoking and conflating, acoustically, aspects of Roberts' biography and the revival's history – to develop a series of meditations upon the source that engage both intellect and feeling. In so doing, the works summon associated experiences, events, emotions, critiques, and significances that are otherwise inaccessible to, or inexpressible through, visual and textual documentation.

John Harvey, March 2013

R R B V E Æ T N S O A

Revival Address

E Roberts, 18 Jan 1905 (ER)

ER : [unintelligible] And his tongues say: 'I am the way'.
A way to what?

Choir : *Tôn: 'Dymuniad' / Tune: 'Desire'*
O God the only mercy,
O Lamb that gave us glory. To everything except destruction.
Hear my brethren,
he gave of himself.

ER : Do you believe that, brethren? [unintelligible], Jesus comes out of
Do you believe that? the grave.
[unintelligible].

Choir : We do! We do! Men must keep their promise.
God will come unto them.

ER : Sing it again that you believe. Give him all, all lands [unintelligible]
and stir up a few friends to serve
God [unintelligible].

Choir : *Tôn: 'Dymuniad' / Tune: 'Desire'*
O God the only mercy,
O Lamb that gave us glory. He will need thousands of friends
in Wales.

ER : You can tell some people stories
in five minutes.
Here is one who rises for his
gloriously.
All eternity will not suffice.
He was brought naked.
What can we give God in return?
The needs of our valuables –
only a copper.
God takest [and he leaves].
God took up his cause;
man cannot do less.

Choir : Ha-ha-ha-ha!

ER / Choir : Do you not hear?

ER : Do you love Jesus?
Do resolve you: he's the way to
be free?

Choir : *Tôn: 'Cwmnêdd' / Tune: 'Neath Valley'*
O the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb,
The Lamb on Calvary.
The Lamb that givest all away.
[unintelligible]

Ffynhonnell : 'Evan Roberts [recordiad sain]' (1905),
trosglwyddwyd i CD (Aberystwyth: Llyfrgell
Genedlaethol Cymru, 2002), Cell E123 3622

Offeryniaeth a Chynhyrchu : Adobe Audition 3.0 a CS6,
Apple MacBookPro a iMac OS X 10.8,
Focusrite Saffire Pro 24 DSP

Yr holl gyfansoddiadau gan : John Harvey

Peiriannur yd a chynhyrchwyd gan : John Harvey

Cysyniad y clawr gan : John Harvey

Dyfeisiwyd a meistrwyd yn yr Ysgol Gelf,
Prifysgol Aberystwyth, 2011–13

Paratowyd ar gyfer CD gan :
Archif Sgrin a Sain Genedlaethol Cymru

Trawsgrifiad Anerjiad y Diwygiad gan :
Catherine Griffiths a John Harvey

Ffynhonnell © & © 2002 Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru
(Archif Sgrin a Sain Genedlaethol Cymru)

Darnau Un i Ddeuddeg © & © 2013 John Harvey

Mae'r prosiect a'r recordiad yn gydweithrediad rhwng
Archif Sgrin a Sain Genedlaethol Cymru,
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, Aberystwyth
ac Ysgol Gelf Prifysgol Aberystwyth.

Rhagor o wybodaeth : evanroberts.johnharvey.org.uk

Source : 'Evan Roberts [sound recording]' (1905),
transfer to CD (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales,
2002), Cell E123 3622

Instrumentation and Production : Adobe Audition 3.0 and
CS6, Apple MacBookPro and iMac OS X 10.8,
Focusrite Saffire Pro 24 DSP

All compositions by : John Harvey

Engineered and produced by : John Harvey

Cover concept by : John Harvey

Conceived and mastered at :
School of Art, Aberystwyth University, 2011–13

Prepared for CD by :
The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales

Revival Address transcript by :
Catherine Griffiths and John Harvey

Source © & © 2002 The National Library of Wales
(The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales)

First to Twelfth Pieces © & © 2013 John Harvey

The project and recording are a collaboration between
The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales,
The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
and the School of Art, Aberystwyth University.

Further information : evanroberts.johnharvey.org.uk

