



Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

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Antigone: Using Particle Generation Methods To Create Aural Scenographies.
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Antigone: Using Particle Generation Methods To Create Aural Scenographies

NTRO Research Statement

ERA Code: NPB2

Tony Brumpton & Jonathan O'Brien



Antigone: Aural Scenography in Three Dimensions

Research Statement

Background

In the contemporary screen media context, a large number of Australians are being exposed to three-dimensional sound technologies, such as Dolby Atmos, which offer more immersive sonic experiences for audiences. As the tools for creating these experiences become increasingly available and affordable, new opportunities arise to apply these technologies in a theatrical sound design context. This research project, undertaken as part of Merlyn Tong's new adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone* (prod. Queensland Theatre), investigates the use of three-dimensional soundscape technology to create new aural scenographies in the context of live performance.

Contribution

The project utilised the software Sound Particles, originally developed for Atmos-equipped film works, to individually phase-shift more than 30 speakers rigged within the performance space in order to create immersive theatrical soundscapes. Using time delays, each speaker activated in the space generated sound such that the audience would experience a given pre-designed sound as though it were coming from a specific point within the performance space, even if there was no speaker located at that place. These dynamics represent new opportunities for theatrical experiences, aural scenographies, and sound design.

Significance

Antigone was a new work by Merlynn Tong, after Sophocles, and was the first application of the Sound Particles software to create aural scenographies within a national Australian theatrical work. The work was commissioned by Queensland Theatre, and devised with the three-dimensional sound technology in mind, with composition central to the process and the dynamic sound operating as a sort of invisible chorus—a tribute to the Greek style—stripped of identity and ambiguous in position. The development of this scenographic approach reveals new and explicitly modern futures for theatrical sound design.