

**Room Tone to the
Stratosphere:
Investigating Sonic
Substructures Through a
Progression to Near Silence**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for
the degree of

Doctor of Creative Arts

under the supervision of Dr Robert Sazdov and
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October 2021

Author declaration.

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Julius Ambrosine declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts in the School of Communications in Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Abstract.

This research uses sound recording and composition practice to investigate the lowest sound layers of selected soundscapes in a progression to recording as near to silence as possible. The field recording method used throughout the research uses a room tone recording approach taken from film production: an atmospheric sound recording of an interior filming location that avoids any primary sounds of anthrophony (human sound), biophony (wildlife sound), and geophony (geophysical sound). Composition based exclusively on the field recordings is then used to investigate the findings of the field recording practice using stringent compositional rules restricting sound processing to amplitude, equalisation, and noise reduction. The first step sees room-tone recording taken out of film production in an attempt to record near-silent rooms within an empty house and compose with the captured room-tone recordings. The same room-tone recording approach is taken outside and used during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdowns in the Sydney CBD to record the city in a state of quietude. Common city anthrophony was minimised through pandemic lockdowns presenting a unique opportunity to capture the removal of primary sound layers. The reduced sound levels made it possible to record the 'room tone' of the city, the lower-level sounds of city function usually masked by the louder sounds of traffic and people. Urban sound layers are then removed entirely by travelling to remote locations in the Australian desert to record an ancient soundscape. There, only the most fundamental geophony of gentle winds are recorded in an environment of extreme quietude. Finally, in an attempt to escape all sound on the ground, weather balloons are used to remove sound layers through altitude, recording through the troposphere, into the stratosphere and up to near-silence above the Ozone Layer.

Acknowledgements.

Thanks to my supervisors Dr Robert Sazdov and Dr Felicity Wilcox for their time, patience and wealth of knowledge in getting me through this. Also to Dr Jon Drummond for the first two years of supervision.

Thanks to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UTS and Tim Laurie.

Thanks to Robert and Jason Brand for their weather balloon expertise.

Thanks to John Holms at the University Sydney Spatial Audio and Acoustics Lab.

Thanks to Dr Eva Cheng at the UTS Acoustic Labs.

Thanks to Rode microphones for providing an NT-SF1 microphone for this research.

Thanks to Lectrosonic for providing an SPDR recorder for the research.

Thanks to Dougie for organising a surprise pub raffle at the local as a fundraiser for my second balloon flight.

Thanks to Wayne and Jen for all their support, and to Wayne for driving out to the desert with me.

Thanks to Aaron Marshall for driving out and helping with the 2nd balloon flight.

Thanks to Owen for all the driving around and helping out with the 3rd balloon flight. Same to Monica, but also for the general humour on the day.

Thanks to Sjaan for putting up with me, listening, laughing, and the constant support and encouragement.

Thanks to my dear Nan (Shirley Duff) for her wit, kindness, support and endless chats over all the years, from 0 – 43. I know you always enjoyed hearing about my “balloon experiments” and would be happy I got there in the end.

Thank you to my mother, Mary Abraham, who would have been so exceptionally chuffed to see me complete such a thing. It is her support, encouragement, creativity, humour, and joy for life that laid the foundation for me to begin and complete an undertaking that is a doctorate.

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Creative Practice – Submitted Sound and Video.**Chapter 1. Interiors – rooms in a state of placidity:**

- 1.1 *Gradualism (the additive approach) (3:40)*
- 1.2 *Rapidity (the subtractive approach) (2:01)*
- 1.3 *Walking Around an Empty House (3:09)*

Chapter 2. Covid-19 Sydney CBD soundscape – peeling back sound layers via the pandemic:

- 2.1 Sydney CBD Covid-19 Location Sound Recordings
- 2.2 *Reinterpretation of UTS Building 10 (3:35)*
- 2.3 *Reinterpretation of the Sydney CBD Covid-19 Soundscape (5:24)*

Chapter 3. Remoteness – Bourke to White Cliffs:

- 3.1 Bourke to White Cliffs Location Sound Recordings
- 3.2 *A Near Silent Desert Sunset with Fly (3:30)*

Chapter 4. Altitude – the weather balloon recording method:

- 4.1 Flight 1_video footage of spinning on launch
- 4.2 Flight 1_unknown high altitude sounds
- 4.3 Flight 2_video excerpts of flight
- 4.4 Flight 3_ 360 video of flight
- 4.5 Flight 3_plane fly by at 11km

UTS Google Drive link to all submitted sound and video:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sSvz0g3jcZgU4o16UN5n9JAPc2s_S9Ql?usp=sharing

