



# ANTIGONE

Adapted by Christopher Adams and directed by Tamsin Shasha



A BROTHER CONDEMNED TO WALK FOREVER IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

A FAMILY TEETERING ON THE BRINK OF CATASTROPHE

A DYSTOPIAN WORLD WHERE ONE GIRL DARES TO TAKE A STAND

**SQ**  
Square Chapel Arts Centre

**aod**  
actors of dionysus



actors of dionysus

aod are a Brighton based theatre company with a vigorous passion to 'make magic from myth'. We create fresh, bold and urgent interpretations of Classical Greek plays and develop new plays inspired by Greek mythology. We have a strong national and international profile and regularly tour our work.

At the heart of our work is collaboration. We have recently embarked on the exciting adventure of working with new young writers and we offer a mentoring programme to emerging directors. This production is an example of the exciting new work we produce when such collaborations take place. We are passionate about providing opportunities for practitioners to develop their craft. We actively invest in and support promising individuals as they begin to develop their careers as theatre artists.

An important aspect of our work is introducing young people to the Classics – particularly those who have never had any Classical education. Through our 25 years we have built up a wealth of experience and knowledge of both Classical Greek theatre and Greek myths.



Our team of education experts have created a unique educational and outreach programme. This encompasses a wide range of workshops which we deliver to schools and colleges across Britain. Our workshops are unique, engaging and practical, allowing students to delve deeper into their work. We are able to tailor workshops to the needs of a particular class or to examination requirements. We are currently offering a special discount to school and college groups who have been to see **Antigone**. Please contact our Education Officer Mark Katz at [mark@actorsofdionysus.com](mailto:mark@actorsofdionysus.com) or 07903 390 087 and use the word 'Antigone' to be offered a discount.

### aod Membership – Want to support the Classics?

We are a registered charity and these are challenging times for the arts. We have not received any funding for this tour. So, if you see the value in our work and would like to support us financially, to ensure that we can continue to create productions and educate young people across the country, we would be very grateful. You can contact us, to make a donation, or offer an annual covenant. Alternatively you can become a **Friend, Patron, Benefactor**, or even a **God** – £45, £250, £1000 or £5000 respectively. Our supporters receive a range of regular, unique benefits from the membership.

We currently have some places available on our board of Trustees. If you would like to join us or find out more we would love to hear from you!

If you have enjoyed this production, please email your comments to us at: [info@actorsofdionysus.com](mailto:info@actorsofdionysus.com). We really value our audience's feedback. You may also wish to email the CEO of Arts Council England: [darren.henley@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:darren.henley@artscouncil.org.uk) to let him know about your experience of watching our work.

#### We would like to thank:

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**TRUSTEES:** Bob Garbett (Chair), Maria Athini, Steve Cowton, Mike Dixon, Catherine Livesey

**INNER CIRCLE:** Sir Stuart Etherington (Chair), James Albrecht, Kit Bird, Lady Lucy French, Steve Pavey, David Stuttard, Dr Rosie Wyles

**HONORARY PATRONS:** Fenella Fielding, Bettany Hughes, Simon Russell-Beale

## PLAYWRIGHT – CHRISTOPHER ADAMS



Many challenges face any adaptor of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Chief among them is how to make sense of Antigone's decision – against all opposition – to bury her brother. Indeed, what did it mean in this time period to leave a body unburied? Properly observed burial rites were essential for the spirit (soul) to pass to the

Underworld. In our modern world in which the very idea of a soul is suspect, how does a dramatist convey the urgency and necessity of Antigone's action? When I sat down with collaborators to talk through possible approaches, the idea of a (not-so-distant) future in which technology was fused into the human body seemed a promising start. What if Polyneices' soul wasn't spiritual, but electronic – what if he needed to be 'shut down' or else face a future of endless suffering? Once this decision was made, the rest of the world quickly fell into place.

I spent two weeks with Actors of Dionysus workshoping ideas for our new world. We experimented with voice activation. We flew drones on stage. We spent hours talking about technology and how it impacts our lives today, and how we expect it to impact our lives in the future.

The workshoping process also allowed us to explore the marginal characters in the original play, particularly Eurydice (Antigone's aunt) and Ismene (Antigone's sister). In Sophocles' text, Eurydice is a presence, but only has a short speech near the end before she walks off stage and commits suicide. Ismene, though important at the beginning of the play, disappears about half-way through. To a modern audience, used



to well-plotted TV dramas and series-length story arcs, the abrupt arrival or departure of a character seems jarring. The workshop allowed us to understand these characters, their prejudices and motivations. For

instance, it is important to keep in mind that Eurydice (and Creon) have a heightened concern for their son Haemon, because their other son Megareus (Haemon's brother), was killed at the start of the war that Polyneices and Eteocles started. Though these tensions are only touched upon in the original (in her few lines, Eurydice mentions that she is 'not unused to grief' – a glancing reference to the loss of her son), they are fertile ground for a dramatist.

Another challenge when adapting any ancient Greek play – not just *Antigone* – is what to do with the choruses. Some adaptations cut them completely; some take a more traditional approach and keep the original text, having them spoken in voiceover, or in unison, or by individual members of the cast. I wanted to find a way to remain true to the spirit of the choruses, but also make them functional in developing the story. Thus the City Archivists were born: a group of quasi-AI figures who retrieve knowledge and regurgitate it, sometimes usefully, sometimes not. Crucially, however, each of the Archivists sections in this adaptation directly relates to a chorus in the original. When Eurydice asks the Archivists to tell her about 'man', I drew inspiration from perhaps the most famous chorus in *Antigone*: 'Wonders are many, but none is more wonderful than man'. But it was important to me, writing 2500 years after these words were written, to re-interpret them, even undercut them: the Archivists may think that man is 'wonderful', but Eurydice, having just had a fight with her husband, has a different perspective on just how 'wonderful' (or not) man really is.

*Antigone* is an exceptionally challenging – but rewarding – play to adapt. It lends itself to endless invention and reinvention – a sign of true art.



# SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE*

by **aod** Associate Director, Deirdre Daly



As part of my work as **aod**'s Associate Director on this production, I carried out some background research into Sophocles and his inspiration for *Antigone*.

Sophocles wrote the play over two thousand years ago and *Antigone* was first performed in about 442 BC as part of the Great Dionysia, a festival in Athens which honoured Dionysus, the God of wine and theatre. The first performance was probably performed in daylight in an amphitheatre.

Sophocles' inspiration for his *Antigone* was the *Saga of the Labdacids* – a story which the Athenian audiences would have been very familiar with:

King Pelops of Pisa believes Laius caused his son's suicide and places a curse on him stating that he will be killed by his own son. Years later Laius becomes King of Thebes and has a son. Fearing the curse, he sends the baby away with a herdsman to be left on a mountain to die. However the herdsman is horrified with this idea, and the baby is passed on to the childless King Polybus. The King names the boy Oedipus and when he grows up, he unknowingly kills Laius, (his own father). He then marries his mother, Jocasta and Oedipus becomes the King, without either of them realising he is her son. When the truth is discovered, Jocasta hangs herself, while Oedipus gouges out his own eyes. The blind King then places another curse on his own two grown sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, dooming them to kill each other. Oedipus goes into exile taking his daughter, Antigone with him to guide him. He eventually dies, just as the curse predicted.

Following King Oedipus's death, his two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles, agree to share the leadership of the city of Thebes by ruling alternate years, but after a year in power,

Eteocles refuses to give up the throne and assumes total control. This leads Polyneices to raise an army and attack the city. Thus Thebes descends into civil war. During the battle the two brothers kill each other, thus the curse of Oedipus is fulfilled. The city's rule is then passed on to the brothers' uncle, Creon, (brother of Jocasta, Oedipus' mother and wife).

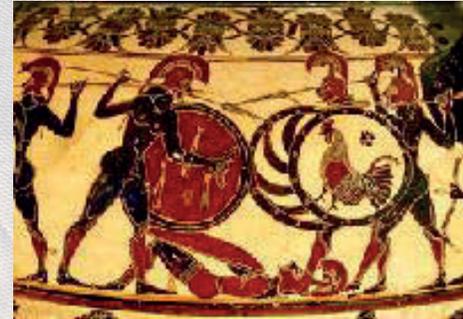


Image on Greek vase



Antigone – Frederic Leighton, 1882

And this is where Sophocles' play *Antigone* begins. Creon announces his first law to the people. One brother, Eteocles, will have a state burial with full honours, but Polyneices (who Creon considers a traitor) will be denied a burial. He will be left to rot where he fell on the battlefield. Creon warns that anyone who attempts to bury him will be punished by death.

In ancient Greece the rituals of washing and anointing the body with oils and singing the songs of lamentation were carried out by the women of the deceased, therefore Antigone naturally wants to bury her brother in order to release his soul from his earthly body. She is outraged at her uncle Creon's new law and refuses to comply. She asserts her religious duty to bury Polyneices – traitor or not – rather than obey the laws of the city. Antigone attempts to bury her brother and is captured. When she refuses to make a public apology Creon orders her to be walled into a cave where she will gradually starve to death.

Meanwhile, the impiety of leaving Polyneices' body unburied causes disturbances in the natural world all around. The blind prophet Tiresias arrives to warn Creon that he should release Antigone. Creon initially remains resistant and



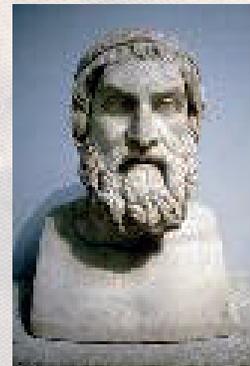
Holly Georgia as Antigone in rehearsals

refuses to change his mind but eventually he is persuaded and has a complete change of heart. He rushes to put matters right – but it is too late – he buries Polyneices to liberate his soul and then hurries to release Antigone. When he arrives at the cave, Antigone has already hung herself, and Creon's son, Haemon (who is engaged to Antigone) lunges at his father but turns the knife on himself, committing suicide over her body. In the final scene of the play, Creon is told by a messenger that his wife, Eurydice, has also killed herself in grief at the loss of her son. The play ends with a sombre warning from the chorus that pride will be punished.

Sophocles introduced the characters of Haemon and Ismene to oppose Creon and Antigone respectively. The action of the play starts the day after Eteocles and Polyneices have died battling for Thebes.

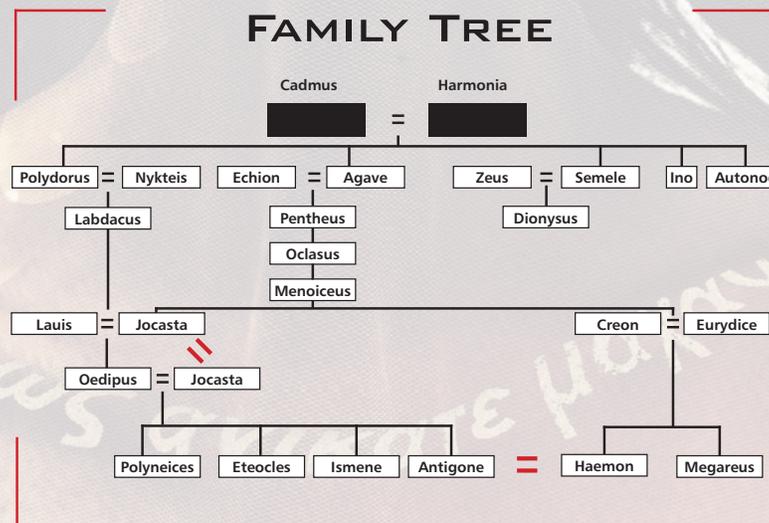
Our production varies considerably with the original. We have made the bold choice of setting the action of the play in the

future – this is a world where technology is merging with humans and drones flock the skies observing the city's inhabitants. We have deviated from the structure of the original play by starting our play at the end, with the one final survivor of the Oedipus family, Antigone's sister Ismene, searching into her recent past about the curse on her family.



Statue of Sophocles: Encyclopaedia Britannica

There are many stories about Sophocles' death, including the suggestion that he choked on an unripe grape, that he lost his breath and suffocated whilst reading out **Antigone** and my personal favourite – that he died of joy when **Antigone** was awarded first prize at the festival! **Antigone** is considered his greatest work. The fact that this play is still performed regularly around the world over two thousand years after it was first written speaks volumes.





# ANTIGONE

Adapted by Christopher Adams  
in collaboration with **aod**

## CAST

Ismene/Drone Operative/Archivist	NATHALIE BARCLAY
Haemon/Polyneices/Archivist	WILL BRIDGES
Eurydice/Tiresias/Archivist	CRYSTAL BROWN
Antigone/Archivist	HOLLY GEORGIA
Creon/Eteocles/Archivist	NICHOLAS CASS-BEGGS

## CREATIVES

Director & Producer	TAMSIN SHASHA
Writer	CHRISTOPHER ADAMS
Associate Director	DEIRDRE DALY
Designer	HELEN COYSTON
Sound Composer & Designer	MATT EATON
Lighting Designer	CHARLOTTE McCLELLAND
Outside Eye	ALLY COLOGNA
Consultant Academic	PROF SIMON GOLDHILL
Assistant Director	FIONA KINGWELL
Design Assistant	ANNA ROBINSON

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager	EDMUND SUTTON
Education Officer	MARK KATZ
Graphic Designers	ROSIE NIBLETT BEN OTTRIDGE
General Manager	MEGAN ROGERS



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**NATHALIE BARCLAY**  
(ISMENE/DRONE OPERATIVE/  
ARCHIVIST)

Nathalie trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. Theatre includes: *Here I Belong* (Pentabus Theatre, UK tour), *Positive* (Park Theatre), *The Class Ceiling* (Southwark Playhouse), *Chapter 2* (New Diorama Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (New Wimbledon Theatre Studio), *Consolation* (Théâtre Volière), *A Gaggle of Saints* (The Albany), *The Boy Who Never Learned To Fly* (Arcola Theatre), *You Once Said Yes* (Nuffield Theatre), *Indian Summer* (White Bear Theatre), *Breaking News* (Cockpit Theatre) and *Macbeth* (Lion and Unicorn Theatre). Screen includes: *Duplicity* (Nathan Miller), *Arnika* (Théâtre Volière), *New Year's Resolution* (Will Hall-Smith), *Gradulthood* (Will Hall-Smith), *50 Year Valentine* (EmJay Productions) and *Awakening* (Canted Image Productions).



**WILL BRIDGES**  
(HAEMON/POLYNEICES/ARCHIVIST)

Theatre includes: *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Macbeth* (Young Shakespeare Company), *Treasure* (Finborough Theatre), *Macbeth: A Tale Of Sound And Fury* (The Hope Theatre), *A Pocketful of Grimms* (Story Pocket Theatre), *NewsRevue* (Canal Cafe Theatre) and *The Xmas Carol* (Old Red Lion Theatre). Will trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and is delighted to be joining **aod**; he hopes you enjoy *Antigone* as much as he's enjoyed working on it!



**CRYSTAL BROWN**  
(EURYDICE/TIRESIAS/ARCHIVIST)

Crystal trained at The Brit School before graduating from The Royal Central School of Speech And Drama in June 2017. Crystal will make her professional debut playing Eurydice in *Antigone* for **aod**. Credits whilst training include: Masha

in *Three Sisters*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Gertrude Chiltern in *An Ideal Husband*, Clytemnestra in *Oresteia* and Queen Margaret in *Richard III*. Additional credits include: *The Girls* (Brighton Dome), *A Season in the Congo* (The Young Vic) and *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland* (Bush Theatre). Crystal recently filmed for *Twelve Days of Christmas* for Channel 4.



**NICHOLAS CASS-BEGGS**  
(CREON/ETEOCLES/ARCHIVIST)

Nicholas began his career as a Contemporary Dancer before training at the Oxford School of Drama. Theatre includes: *Proud and Velocity* (Finborough Theatre), *Dracula* for Mark Bruce Company (Bristol Old Vic, UK tour), *Four Days in Hong Kong* (Orange Tree Theatre), *The Zero Hour* and *6 Degrees* for Imitating the Dog (West Yorkshire Playhouse, UK tour), *Carousel* (Barbican), *The Temprementals* (Greenwich Theatre), *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New Vic Theatre), *Antigone* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *The Snowman* (Peacock Theatre and Seoul, Korea), *Park Avenue* (Lilian Baylis Studio), *Pajama Game* (Union Theatre), *Kismet* (ENO), *Trailer* (Camden Peoples Theatre) and *Tamerlano*, *Rakes Progress* and *Orlando* (Royal Opera House).



**HOLLY GEORGIA**  
(ANTIGONE/ARCHIVIST)

Holly trained at Bretton Hall. Theatre includes: *The Oresteia* (Shakespeare's Globe), *The Tempest* (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse), *Marie Lloyd's Variety Box* (Hackney Empire), *Blithe Spirit* (New Century Theatre, UK Tour), *Improv Noir* (Comedy Festivals) and *The Twits* (Struts & Frets). Screen includes: *Shadows* (Winner: Audience Choice Award – Intendence Film Festival, US), *Watch Over Me* (Winner: Original Drama – Houston International Film Festival, US), *The Innocent*, *Dancing in the Ashes* and *RAGE: A Midsummer's Eve*. Motion Capture training includes *Carrie Thief* (Performance Capture Combat Designer for *The Lord of the Rings*).

## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### TAMSIN SHASHA – DIRECTOR & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Tamsin is the Artistic Director of **aod**. She trained at Oxford School of Drama, Ecole Philippe Gaulier and National Centre for Circus Arts. She co-founded the company in 1993 and has worked as Director, Writer, Performer, Aerialist and Movement Coach. Directing credits for **aod** include *Trojan Women*, *Oedipus* and *Lysistrata*. This year she co-produced and performed in a new play, *She Denied Nothing* (Brighton Fringe). She co-wrote and performed in *Bacchic* and *Helen* (national and international tours). Her roles for **aod** include: *Medea*, *Antigone*, *Dionysus* and *Lysistrata*. Other acting credits include Baroness Pannonica Rothschild in *Misterioso* (Riverside) and *Cabaret of Dorian Grey* (West End).

### CHRISTOPHER ADAMS – WRITER

Christopher Adams is a British-American playwright. His full-length and short plays have been performed in London, Birmingham, Dublin and Shanghai. His plays *Lynchburg* and *Haunts* were long-listed for the Bruntwood Prize. He has attended the Royal Court Theatre's Young Writers Programme, the Studio Writers Group, the Arcola Theatre's Writing Group and the Orange Tree Collective.

### DEIRDRE DALY – ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Deirdre has worked with **aod** on several productions, most recently as Associate Director for *She Denied Nothing* (Brighton Fringe) and Assistant Director for *Lysistrata* (UK tour). Since completing her MA in Theatre Directing, she has worked as an Assistant Director on *Take On Me* (Dante or Die), *Dr Blighty* (Nutmhut) and *Home Fires* (Inroad Productions and Zap Arts). Recent directing credits include: *The Tempest*, *DNA*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Sussex and *One Minute* at the Tristan Bates Theatre. Deirdre is an experienced Community Theatre Director, Drama Teacher, Theatre Facilitator and Youth Theatre Director. She is founder and Artistic Director of Kaleidoscope in East Sussex.

### HELEN COYSTON – SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Helen trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Credits include: *Goth Weekend* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Our Mutual Friend* (Hull Truck Theatre), *The Acedian Pirates* (Theatre 503), *Short Changed* (Theatre Royal Plymouth), *My Mother Said I Never Should* (St James Theatre), *The Musicians* (Royal and Derngate), *Land of our Fathers* (Associate Designer, UK tour), *Peter Pan* (Watford Palace Theatre), *Made up Stories From my Unmade Bed* (Lyric Hammersmith/Latitude Festival), *1002 Nights* (National Youth Theatre), *Watership Down* and *There is a War* (Watford Palace Theatre), *Bluebird* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival). [www.helencoyston.com](http://www.helencoyston.com)

### MATT EATON – SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER

Work for **aod** includes: *Medea* and *Helen*. Sound design credits include: *Furious Folly*, *Not the End of the World* (EFF), *The History Boys* (UK Tour), *Ravens* and *Titus Andronicus* (USF, Florida), *Kethra*, *Wuthering Heights* (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre), *Break The Floorboards* (Watford Palace Theatre), *Treasure Island* and *The Wind in the Willows* (Creation Theatre), *Grimm's Tales*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Winter's Tale* (Guildford Shakespeare Company). Credits as a Composer include: *Faust*, *Great Scott*, *Drowning on Dry Land* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Trafalgar Studios), *Dracula*, *Shadow Shows*, *Nosferatu* (Warwick Arts Centre) and *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (Midlands Arts Centre).

### CHARLOTTE McCLELLAND – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Charlotte McClelland trained on an Arts Council Bursary at the Central School of Speech and Drama. She has designed lighting for a variety of music, dance, drama and site specific performances. Credits include: *The Photophonic Experiment* (Contemporary Music Network), *Carmen* and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Longborough Festival Opera), *Angels on High* (Guildford International Music Festival), *Snow White* (South Hill Park Arts Centre) and *Dracula*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Frankenstein* (Blackeyed Theatre).

### ALLY COLOGNA – OUTSIDE EYE

Ally trained at the Jacques Lecoq school. She was joint Artistic Director of Brouhaha Theatre Company from 1991-2004. Ally teaches Physical Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, St Mary's University and LDA Fordham University, USA. As an Actor she has collaborated with Paul Hunter and John Wright (*Told by an Idiot*), Marcello Magni (*Complicité*) and Alain Gautré (*Clown Genius*). Ally recently directed for Haste Theatre on *Beyond Cragpoth Rock* (London run and UK tour) and The Upstairs Brigade on *Birthday in Suburbia* (St Mary's University and Brighton Fringe). She regularly directs at St Mary's University.

### FIONA KINGWELL – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Since Graduating from the University of York Fiona has directed *The Lost Girls* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Sod's Law Theatre), *In Motion* at Theatre503 (Full Circle Productions) and *Madame Bovary's Communist After-Party* at the VAULT Festival and the Camden Fringe Festival. Other Directing credits include: *A World Without Work* (Arcola Theatre) and *Waking Beauty* (The Ovalhouse). Credits as Assistant Director include: *Twelfth Night* (York Shakespeare Project) and *Heading to Higher Ground* (Company of Angels). She will direct *Sacrament* later this year at the Theatre Upstairs in Dublin.

### EDMUND SUTTON – PRODUCTION MANAGER

Edmund Sutton has a Physics degree from Bristol University. Previous work for **aod** includes *Helen* (UK tour) and *The Bacchae* (Osterley Park). Technical Management credits include: *Our Man in Havana* (Creative Cow), *Anyday* (Max Calaf), *Snow Play* and *Hansel and Gretel* (Lyngo Theatre), and *Sid's Show* (Sid Sloane). European tours include: *Macbeth* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (TNT), and *The Great Gatsby*, *Monsieur Ibrahim et les Fleurs du Coran*, and *Au Revoir les Enfants* (Tour de Force Theatre). He is a member of the Institute of Physics and the Association of Lighting Designers and volunteers with Thames21, clearing rubbish from the River Thames.

### ANNA ROBINSON – SET & COSTUME DESIGN ASSISTANT

Anna is going into her third and final year of Design for Stage at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Theatre design credits include: *A Song for Ella Grey* (Northern Stage), *Em the Musical* (RCSSD), *The Performance Salon* (YoPro Collective, Battersea Arts Centre), *Heritage* (Northern Stage). Performance credits include: *Get Santa* (Northern Stage), *ENFJ* (Young Company, Northern Stage), *Heritage* (Young Company, Northern Stage), *Girls Like That* (Springboard, Northern Stage).

### PROFESSOR SIMON GOLDHILL – SCRIPT ADVISOR

Simon Goldhill is the Director of CRASSH, a Professor in Greek Literature and Culture, and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. His appointment in 2011 coincided with the Centre's move to the Alison Richard Building and its 10th anniversary. Simon's research interests include: Greek Tragedy, Greek Culture, Literary Theory, Later Greek Literature, and Reception. His latest book is titled *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity*. He directs the ERC-funded project: *The Bible and Antiquity in Nineteenth-Century Culture*.

### MARK KATZ – EDUCATION OFFICER

For **aod**, Mark has worked as an Actor as well as Education Officer and workshop leader; Credits for **aod** include: *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, *Antigone*, *Grave Gifts*, *Medea* and *The Face Of Tragedy*. Mark has designed and run many workshops for **aod** and other organisations in the UK and abroad and specialises in Greek drama and modern comedy. Other acting credits include: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Great Expectations*, *The Tempest* and *The Jungle Book*. Mark recently appeared in the films *Connected* and *Walls*, and works extensively within Corporate Theatre and sketch comedy.

## DIRECTOR – TAMSIN SHASHA



This project was born out of a desire to collaborate with new writers and also mentor emerging directors, hence a vital two week Research and Development earlier this year to explore the concept and the structure of the mentoring programme. This invaluable period initially funded by the Arts Council of England, often posed more questions than it did answers, but ultimately it afforded us an early first draft

of the script and the beginnings of a template on how to develop the mentoring programme going forward. And so our process has been very collaborative; working with my Associate Director, Deirdre Daly and Assistant Director, Fiona Kingwell, we have played, devised and re-scripted with the rest of the cast, refining and developing Chris's script throughout the rehearsal process.

Directing any play, ancient or modern, presents its own challenges but directing one of the most famous ancient Greek tragedies in a dystopian future, where humans are individually coded and an internal chip represents a soul, has been one of the most challenging! We took inspiration from episodes of *Black Mirror* and films like *Minority Report* and *The Matrix*, where the ease of modern technology and social media becomes a bleakly controlling mechanism to restrain and contain our lives. We also worked with an Outside Eye, Ally Cologna, to explore just how to recreate this modern world of voice activation and human generated screens, summoned from thin air. Our designer Helen Coyston created a dynamic set that reflected a sparse and unforgiving world of metal and mesh, but could also offer more abstract possibilities for movement, which I wanted to explore at key moments in the play, such as when time is running out for Creon in the Teiresias scene and the infernal machine that is Greek tragedy reaches its climax. Sound and Lighting Design were also integral and Matt Eaton and Charlotte McClelland helped to add colour, texture and depth to this alien world.

The most difficult question perhaps was quite how to get to the heart of the play against this technological backdrop; the story of a girl who buries her brother, Polyneices, defying

an edict laid down by the newly appointed leader, her uncle, Creon. It was important for us that the power and message of Sophocles' original was not subsumed in sci-fi wizardry and in many ways our low-tech staging has not allowed us to get too distracted. In Sophocles' version Creon denies Polyneices' burial and says: "He is to lie unburied for the dogs and birds to feed on, a mutilated corpse for all to see." (David Stuttard, *Antigone* 2016). To the ancient Greeks burial is "all about honour and indeed treatment of the corpse is a kind of last judgement performed upon the dead man by other men still living, and in passing this final verdict it was men's own humanity that was on trial". (Dr Robert Parker, *Punishing The Dead*, and Dionysus Omnibus). In our adaptation Polyneices' soul is represented by a tiny chip. We are profoundly aware of his suffering as we repeatedly hear him reliving the last violent throws of his death. The timeless ritual of burial and release of the soul in this sense has never felt more necessary and therefore Creon's decision has never felt more wrong.

What of the other themes in the play – the battle of the individual against the State, represented by the rebel Antigone and the authority figure, Creon? Is there any way we can elicit sympathy for a man who is so arrogant, inflexible and misogynistic? And doesn't Antigone display the very same stubbornness and inflexibility? And where does Ismene figure in her actions? Or indeed Haemon, her supposed fiancé? This is clearly a dysfunctional family and the curse of Oedipus lives on! In fleshing out the smaller parts of Haemon and Ismene and giving Eurydice a voice, Chris's script looks to them to channel empathy and understanding. While Creon and Antigone are locked in ever increasing verbal assaults, it is the people closest to them that suffer most and perhaps that is the greatest tragedy of them all.

I want to thank my cast and collaborative team for their generosity and support in realising this project and for being so open and spirited throughout rehearsals. My heartfelt thanks too go to our co-commissioners, Square Chapel Arts Centre, whose support, in financially testing times, has helped us to launch this new work.

Writing these programme notes a week before we open, we have yet to decide on an ending. As with any creative process and especially within Greek tragedy itself, the clock is ticking, and we are putting our collective faith in that mercurial God, Dionysus, to help us find one!



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*“Wisdom is by far the greatest part of Joy”*

**Antigone - by Sopcles**

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