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Journal of the Canadian Acoustical Association - Revue de l'Association canadienne d'acoustique

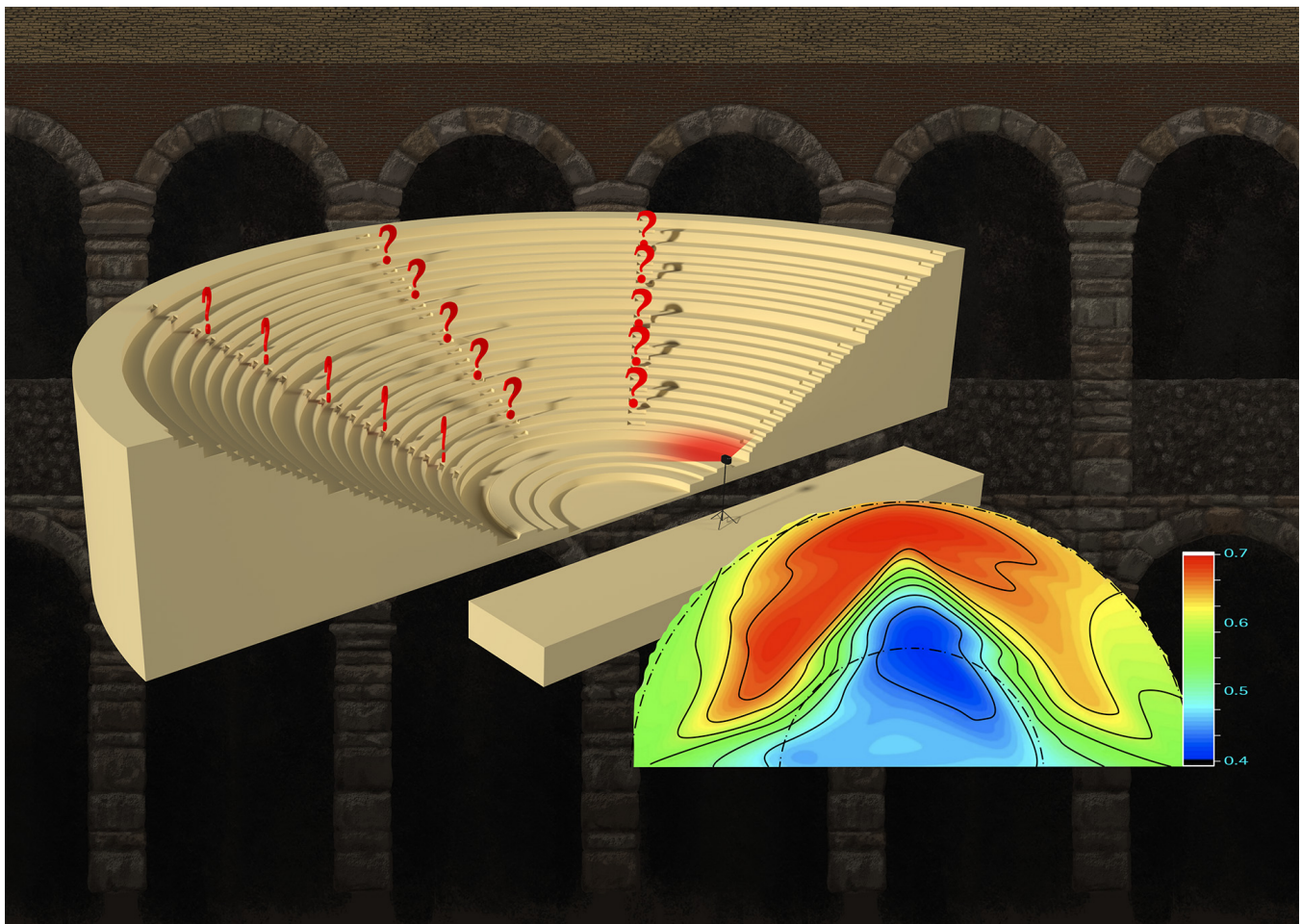
MARCH 2021

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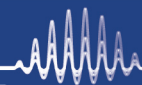
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University of British Columbia

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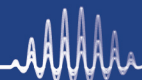
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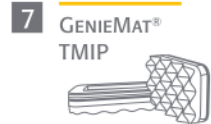
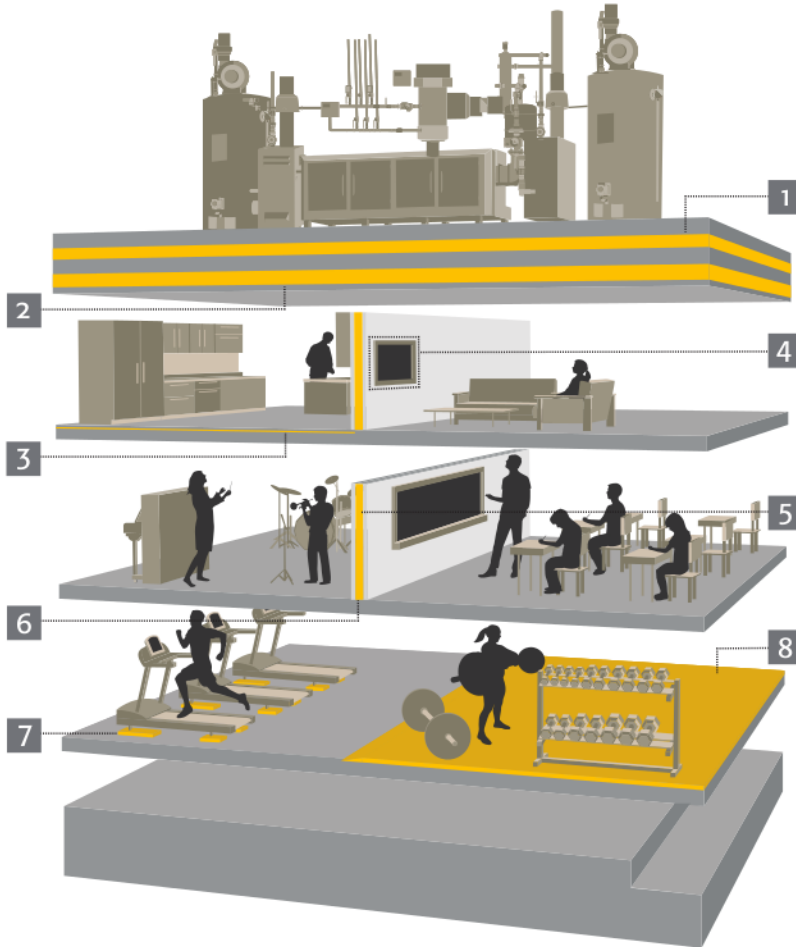


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Editor's note: The role of Sound towards a post-pandemic resilient society Éditorial : Le rôle de Son dans une société résiliente post-pandémique



The role of Sound towards a post-pandemic resilient society

Dear reader, it is with a bit of hope that I write you this editorial at the beginning of the first issue of the new year.

We now have vaccines, and although the pandemic is still struggling our world, we can start hoping that there will be some light in front of us. We can start to make plans and dreams post-pandemic scenarios.

Over the last year, we have learned new meanings of the word “globalization”; we understood we are connected and should be aware of the interconnected challenges of our society. We all know the impacts that the social distancing is causing, but it is now time for recovery and resiliency.

Many researchers over the last 12 months have been able to keep doing a bit of researches, while many businesses have been forced to close. My desire is now that researchers will be dedicated more than ever to support companies. A radical transformation of our society is needed not only for the post-pandemic era but also for the multiple unresolved crises we still have (starting from *climate change*). We live together in an interconnected world, and we will need to communicate more and help each other, overcoming the separations that have been unfortunately challenged us in the past. We will restart traveling, meeting people, discovering places, and pursuing sustainable development.

Now, let me present this issue. This is a real international issue, with overseas making most of the issue. In an era when we cannot travel and performance spaces can be visited only virtually, we have two papers about Roman Theatres that will allow our Canadian readers to travel both geographically and historically. Moreover, we have a highly interesting paper on the history of hearing loss and much other content.

I wish you a pleasant reading of this issue.
Umberto Berardi
Editor in Chief.

Le rôle du Son dans une société résiliente post-pandémique

Cher lecteur, c'est avec un peu d'espoir que je vous écris cet éditorial au début du premier numéro de la nouvelle année.

Avec l'arrivée des vaccins, et bien que nous luttons encore contre cette pandémie à travers le monde, nous pouvons commencer à espérer un peu de lumière dans le futur. Nous pouvons commencer à faire des plans et à rêver à des scénarios post-pandémiques.

Au cours de l'année dernière, nous avons appris de nouvelles significations du mot «mondialisation»; nous avons compris que nous sommes connectés et que nous devons être conscients des défis d'interconnexion de notre société. Nous connaissons tous les impacts que la distanciation sociale entraîne, mais il est maintenant le temps de la reprise et de la résilience.

Au cours des 12 derniers mois, de nombreux chercheurs ont pu continuer à faire quelques recherches, tandis que de nombreuses entreprises ont été contraintes de fermer. Mon souhait est maintenant que les chercheurs se consacrent plus que jamais à soutenir les entreprises. Une transformation radicale de notre société est nécessaire non seulement pour l'ère post-pandémie, mais aussi pour les multiples crises non résolues que nous connaissons encore (à commencer par le changement climatique). Nous vivons ensemble dans un monde interconnecté, et nous devons, plus que jamais, communiquer et nous entraider, surmonter les séparations qui nous ont malheureusement été contestées dans le passé. Nous recommencerons à voyager, à rencontrer des gens, à découvrir des lieux et à poursuivre le développement durable.

Maintenant, permettez-moi de présenter ce numéro. Il s'agit d'un véritable numéro international, avec, pour l'essentiel, des auteurs d'outre-mer. À une époque où nous ne pouvons pas voyager, où les espaces de spectacle ne peuvent être visités que virtuellement, nous avons deux articles sur les théâtres romains qui permettront à nos lecteurs canadiens de voyager à la fois géographiquement et historiquement. De plus, nous avons un article très intéressant sur l'histoire de la perte auditive et bien d'autres contenus.

En vous souhaitant une agréable lecture.
Umberto Berardi
Rédacteur en chef

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MEASUREMENTS OF ACOUSTICAL PARAMETERS IN THE ROMAN THEATRE OF VERONA

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Résumé

L'attention des érudits concernant l'acoustique des anciens théâtres en plein air s'est considérablement accrue au cours des siècles et parmi les bâtiments historiques qui ont survécu jusqu'à nos jours, l'acoustique du théâtre romain de Vérone n'a pas encore été approfondie. Dans cet article, les résultats de l'étude acoustique ont été comparés aux valeurs mesurées par des chercheurs dans les théâtres romains de Bénévent et de Séville. Cependant, les données de post-traitement obtenues à l'intérieur du théâtre de Vérone ont été analysées de deux manières différentes : par une méthodologie classique représentant les graphiques des paramètres acoustiques, et par la création d'une vidéo montrant une réponse impulsionnelle (IR) en temps réel et les réflexions relatives survenues aux limites de la construction. La technique la plus récente a été réalisée en utilisant un réseau de microphones sphériques multicanaux, qui rappelle l'approche MIMO, capable d'avoir un contrôle spatial complet de la propagation du son dans l'espace. Les auteurs de cet article illustrent une brève histoire du théâtre, y compris la description des éléments de construction, ainsi que deux procédures distinctes en montrant les résultats qui renforcent la nécessité d'utiliser l'approche MIMO à côté des graphiques traditionnels capables de détecter la directivité des réflexions sonores et d'estimer l'intensité de la diffusion.

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Mots clefs: Théâtre antique en plein air; paramètres acoustiques; échantillonnage PCM spatial, réseau de microphones sphériques, mesures MIMO.

Abstract

The attention of the scholars to the acoustics of ancient open-air theatres has increased considerably through the centuries. Among the historical buildings survived to nowadays the acoustics of the Roman theatre of Verona has not been deeply investigated, yet. In this paper, the outcomes of the acoustic survey have been compared with the values measured by researchers in the Roman theatres of Benevento and Seville. However, the post-processing data obtained inside the theatre of Verona have been analysed in two different ways: by a standard methodology representing the graphs of the acoustic parameters, and by the creation of a video showing a real-time impulse response (IR) and relative reflections occurred at the boundaries of the construction. The latest technique has been realised by using a multichannel spherical microphone array, which calls back the MIMO approach that is capable to have complete spatial control of the sound propagation through space. The authors of this paper illustrate a brief history of the theatre, including the description of the construction elements, and also two distinct procedures in showing the results that strengthen the necessity of using the MIMO approach beside the traditional graphs capable to detect the directionality of sound reflections and to estimate the intensity of scattering.

Keywords: Open-air ancient theatre; acoustical parameters; spatial PCM sampling, spherical microphone array, MIMO measurements.

1 Introduction

Recently, the European Union has financed several research projects in order to increment the knowledge related to the architectural and acoustical characteristics of ancient open-air theatres [1-4]. The necessity of further investigations is driven by the intention to adopt the acoustics of classical open-air theatres, historically used for comedies and trage-

dies, to contemporary uses, including musical entertainments and summer festivals [5-7]. In fact, the introduction of modern sound systems electronically amplified could cause a risk of damaging these cultural heritages, corrupting their preservation to the new generations. This paper focuses on the acoustic study of the Roman theatre of Verona, a city located in northern Italy, in comparison with the acoustics existing in the Roman theatre of Benevento and Seville.

Today the Roman theatre of Verona is back to be one of the city points flourishing of cultural activities during the summer seasons.

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2 The Roman Theatre of Verona

2.1 Historical Background

When Romans planned the first expansion behind the river Adige, Verona was a small village developed along two main roads, called *Via Postumia* and *Via Claudia Augusta*. Under the influence of Julius Caesar, Verona was proclaimed a *municipium* in 49 BC, to be governed by local magistrates. As such, a great transformation began: the main doors of the city walls became monumental and the civic spaces saw the construction of different public buildings.

The idea of building a theatre out of the core of the village was primarily due to taking advantage of the natural slope of Saint Peter's hill in order to save as much construction materials as possible to support the steps of the *cavea* [8]. The theatre was surrounded by a temple honoured to god *Jupiter*, built on top of the hill and connected to it through a few terraces (Figure 1).

The roman age was for Verona the first flourishing period, with a singular richness of architectural monuments and bridges. During the 3rd century AC, the theatre of Verona started to fall in disuse. The great cause was the development of Christianity, which considered immoral all kinds of shows [9]. Another reason was a fire occurred in the second half of the 3rd century, which destroyed the core of the theatre, causing the fusion of the lead pipelines that were used for collecting rainwater. After that, the theatre was transformed into a necropolis, while the temple was converted to a Christian church [10].

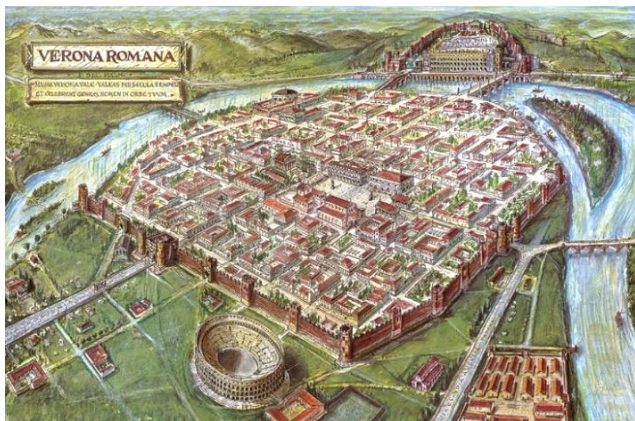


Figure 1: Ideal reconstruction of Verona during the 1st century AC, by G. Ainardi.

During the Middle Ages, an entire district was built on the same site, with private residences standing directly above the Roman theatre, covering completely the historical building. During the 19th century, the invasion of the Austrian soldiers transformed the site into a military base. Different campaigns of archaeological excavations were promoted by Andrea Monga, a well-off merchant. His effort brought to the purchase of the whole area where the theatre was located just underneath the various constructions built wildly on the hill [11].

A French architect, named Edmond-Jean-Baptiste Guilleme (1826-1894), described the conditions of the theatre

and produced lots of drawings, showing to be deeply keen in studying all the details noted on his booklet (i.e. Memoire).

The sketch represented in Figure 2 gives an idea of how the theatre should be erected, based on the hypothesis of Guilleme. The wooden sticks, supported by shelves at the level of the third order, should be a trace of the presence of a *velarium* that coronated the ambulatory [12].

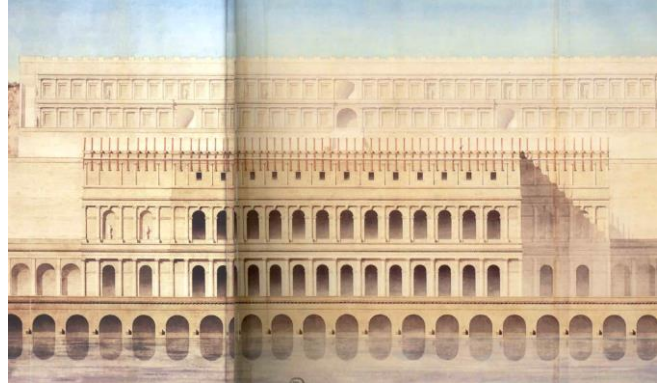


Figure 2: Elevation of the Roman theatre. Reconstruction designed by E. Guilleme, 1860 [12].

2.2 Constructive characteristics

The structural elements of the Roman theatre of Verona were realized by using a light grey tuff, which corresponds to the stone composing S. Peter's hill [8]. Despite its good resistance, the tuff deteriorates quickly if subject to meteorological conditions when installed outdoors. Another type of stone (i.e. limestone from Valpolicella), in white and pink colours, was used for architectural decorations, frames and arch keys.

The architectural orders of the columns were tuscan for the lowest level, ionic for the second and corinthium for the upper level [8].

Because the theatre was built on the slope of the hill, the heavy rains during adverse conditions could provoke landslides. In order to comply with this problem, a cut of 18×2 cm (L×W) was created into the stone blocks between the steps of the audience area, where the rainwater falling from the hill could be collected and convolved to the river through a canalization system below the *cavea* [10].

What is visibly disrupting the continuity of the hemi-circular seats is the construction of a medieval church dedicated to S. Siro and Libera (Figure 3).

The original capacity of the theatre of Verona could be approximately 3000 seats, although today it is reduced to 2000. The main parts are the following:

- The orchestra is placed at the centre of the theatre in a semi-circular space. The diameter of the orchestra is 29.60 meters;
- The *proscenium* is in front of the scenic building and it is 1.4 meters above the level of the orchestra;
- The entries (called *vomitoria*) are usually at the sides of the *parascaenia* and facilitate the public access to the seats;



Figure 3: View of the Roman Theatre in Verona and of a post-construction on the left representing the church of S. Siro and Libera.

- The scenic building is composed of tuff blocks and covered by marble sheets. It was 27 meters high, 72 meters long and 6 meters wide;
- The *cavea* is the space dedicated to the audience. Horizontal corridor (*praecinatio*) subdivided the *cavea* into two main sectors, called *ima* (lower) and *summa* (upper) *cavea*;
- The *ambulacrum* (ambulatory) is an arched gallery crowning the upper *cavea*, having dimensions of 2.3 meters height and 2.95 meters width.

2.3 Brief excursus of other Roman theatres

Theatres of similar characteristics were built also in other parts of the Roman territory. In particular, to cite a few of them, the theatre of Benevento, located nearby Naples, and Seville, in Spain, represent the evidence of the flourishing construction activity undertaken by Romans other than their love for the shows. The theatre of Benevento and Seville are herein chosen in order to show a few samples of how the Romans were able to construct different volume sizes of such types of buildings.

The theatre of Benevento was built during the 2nd century AC and was made of up to 25 arcades divided into three levels. The diameter of the *cavea* is approximately 80m while the diameter of the orchestra is 20m [13]. The *cavea* is composed of 19 and 8 steps, respectively related to the *ima* and *summa cavea*, against the 25 and 12 steps found in Verona. The large dimensions of the theatre allowed it to have a capacity of over 10000 seats [14]. The scenic building was 44.2m long and 3.5m wide, but nowadays only disconnecting parts of the *scenae fronts* are erected, as shown in Figure 4.

Another important Roman theatre is that one located in Seville, Spain, so called the Italic theatre because it was built in one of the Roman provinces. In particular, the diameter of the *cavea* is about 71m, similar to what is found in Verona (i.e. 76m), having a capacity of 3000 seats. The diameter of the orchestra is 15m while the dimensions of the scenic building are 42m in length and 5.6m in width [15]. From Figure 5 it is possible to see that the *ima cavea* and the scenic building have been preserved almost intact.

The presence of the scenic building is very important under acoustic point of view, because it promotes to build-up of the reflections, acting as a reflector that directs the sound towards the audience area.



Figure 4: Aerial view of the Roman theatre of Benevento

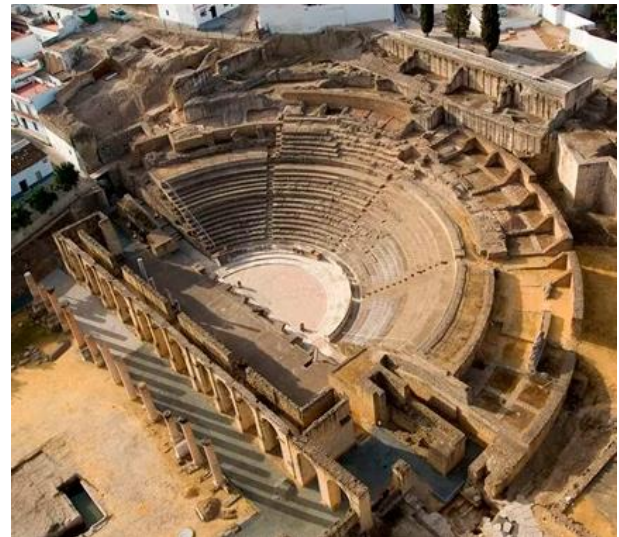


Figure 5: Italic theatre of Santiponce, Seville.

Table 1 summarises the architectural features of the three theatres, as discussed.

Table 1: Architectural characteristics of the theatres of Benevento, Verona and Seville.

Description	Benevento	Verona	Seville
Orchestra diameter (m)	20	29.6	15
Cavea diameter (m)	80	76	71
Actual Capacity (seats)	8000	2000	3000
Scenic Blg [L×W] (m)	44.2×3.5	72×6	42×5.6

3 Acoustical measurements in Verona

In order to analyse the acoustic characteristics of the theatre of Verona, an acoustic survey was carried out with the following equipment:

- Equalised omnidirectional loudspeaker (Look Line);
- Microphones:
 - Binaural dummy head (Neumann KU-100);
 - B-Format (Sennheiser Ambeo);
 - Omnidirectional microphone (Bruel&Kjaer)

- 32-channel (MhAcoustics em32 Eigenmike®);
- 360° Camera;
- Personal Computer connected to the loudspeaker and all the receivers.

The measurements were executed by using a dodecahedral sound source emitting an excitation signal (a 20s long Exponential Sine Sweep (ESS)) having a uniform sound pressure level for the range between 40 Hz and 20 kHz, while the microphones were employed to record signals necessary to obtain the impulse responses (IRs).

The sound source was placed at 1.5m from the finished floor, precisely in the proscenium area where the actors were used to stand on, and the microphones were positioned on the radial axes of the *cavea*, with the probes at the height of 1.1m above their reference floor. All the microphones were moved for 11 positions across the *cavea* to represent as much as possible the audience area (Figure 6). The 360° camera was installed in the same positions as the em32 microphone locations. The acoustics measurements were carried out without any audience and any scenery installed.

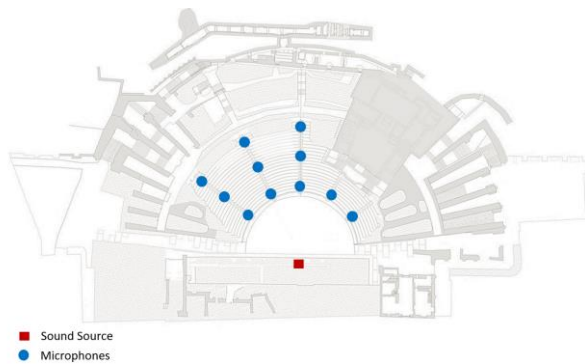


Figure 6: Measurement setup: red point indicates the sound source position and the blue points indicate the receiver positions.

The reason why different microphones were used is to highlight the difference of result representation between the traditional setup and the innovative system. The multichannel em32 Eigenmike® microphone (manufactured by MhAcoustics), equipped with 32 capsules mounted on a spherical surface, has the capability to extract any arbitrary directivity of virtual microphones from real microphones arrays by using a Spatial PCM Sampling (SPS) beamformer, which has a better resolution for high directivity patterns when used as an 8th order cardioid, by representing 122 directions uniformly covering the whole solid angle [16].

4 Results

4.1 Traditional acoustic parameters

Figure 7 shows the IR measured with the dodecahedral sound source. The recorded ESS signals have been processed by using the plugin Aurora suitable for Audition.

Several acoustic parameters defined in the international standards ISO 3382-1 [17], such as the early decay time (EDT), reverberation time (T_{30}), clarity (C_{80}) and definition (D_{50}) have been analysed [18]. Figures 8 to 11 show the comparison between the values found in Verona and meas-

ured by the authors and those related to the other two open-air theatres, as provided by the literature [14, 15].

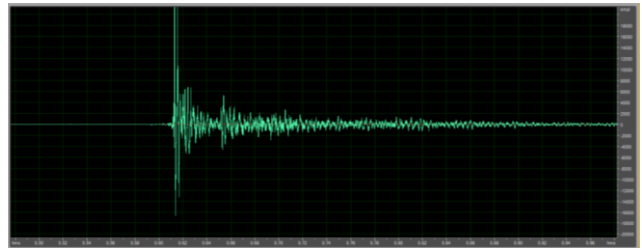


Figure 7: Measured IR in the Roman theatre of Verona having the sound source placed in the *proscenium* and the receiver (omnidirectional microphone) placed in the central sector of the *summa cavea*.

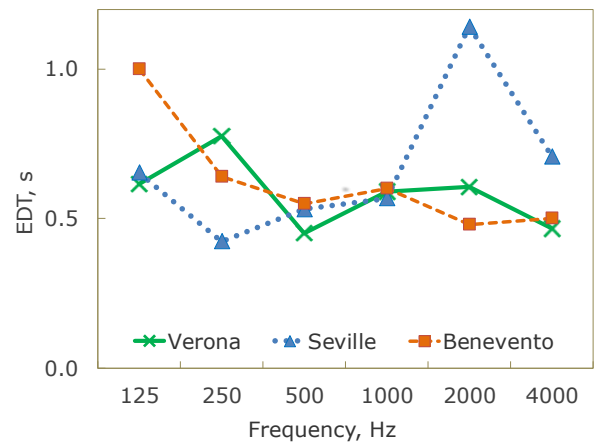


Figure 8: Measured results of Early Decay Time (EDT).

The values of the acoustic parameters are shown in the octave bands between 125 Hz and 4 kHz, considered as the average results of all the measurement positions.

Figure 8 shows that the EDT is approximately 0.6s in Verona, having the values over the frequency range similar to Benevento. What is most in evidence from the graph above is the peak at 2 kHz related to Seville, probably due to the presence of the entire stage walls, reflecting strongly the high frequencies sound rays. However, the overall value of EDT is good for both speech and music in all the theatres.

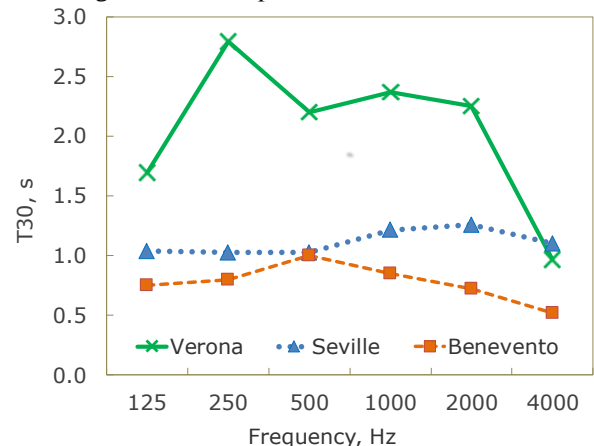


Figure 9: Measured results of Reverberation Time (T_{30}).

Figure 9 shows that T_{30} is higher in Verona than the other two theatres. This effect is due mainly to the reflections on the buildings surrounding the *cavea*, like the presence of the archaeological museum on one of the extremities of the scenic building, the church of S. Siro and Libera, the convent of S. Jerome parallel to the scenic building and behind the *summa cavea* and other residential properties crowning other sides and built on the slope of S. Peter's hill. The buildings' facades reflect the sound and therefore this geometrical circumstance is favourable to cause a longer reverberant tail.

In Benevento and Seville, despite the partial presence of the scenic building, no significant reflections are given by other contributions because of the absence of surrounding buildings and, thus, the values of T_{30} are contained around 1s. Probably the difference between Benevento and Seville regarding the integrity of the scenic building's wall justifies that slight variance in values, which is null at 500 Hz.

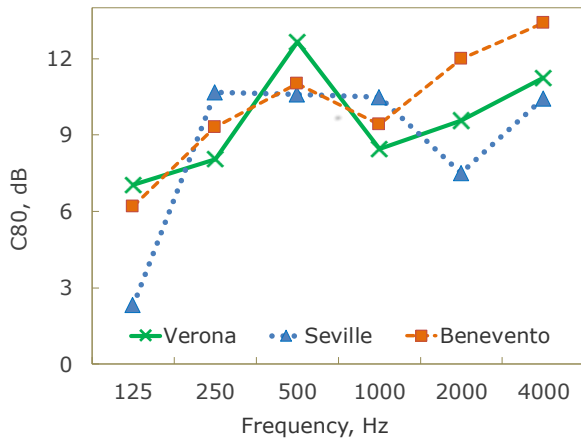


Figure 10: Measured results of Clarity Index (C80).

Figure 10 shows the averaged values of C_{80} of all the receivers as a function of frequency. The results indicate that clarity is similar among the three theatres. If the average value is approximated to 11dB across all the frequency bands, it can be considered good for music perception. High peaks were found at 500 Hz in Verona and at 4 kHz in Benevento, which could be due to the materials (i.e. stone in Verona and bricks in Benevento) currently installed on the seats of the *cavea* as a result of recent restoration works [14]. These hard surface materials reflect the sound at different frequency bands and help to achieve a good listening. In Seville probably the roughness of the original stone of the seats attenuated this effect, resulting in more uniform on the mid frequencies, with very good clarity at 125 Hz.

For all the three cases, although the field is not completely diffuse as the open-air theatres are, the definition (D_{50}) is 85% across all frequencies, as shown in Figure 11, which is considered a good value for good listening and speech comprehension based on the parameters of Greek and Roman theatres. The values over all the frequency bands are more than 0.5, except for 125 Hz of Seville, which is slightly low compared to the other ones but still considered an acceptable value.

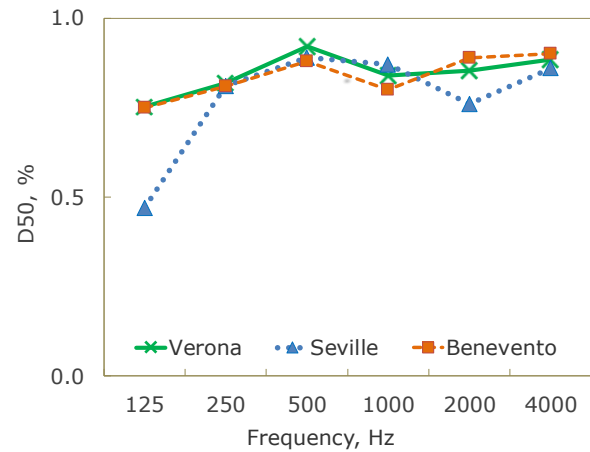


Figure 11: Measured results of Definition (D_{50}).

The analysis then considered the sound strength (G), which is a more suitable parameter to characterize the acoustic of an open-air space than the reverberation time [19]. It is analysed in relation to the Roman theatre of Verona, only.

In Figure 12, all the values of the strength are positive, with significant robustness which can be considered a good result for sound amplification in open air theatre. It is due to the buildings surrounding the *cavea*.

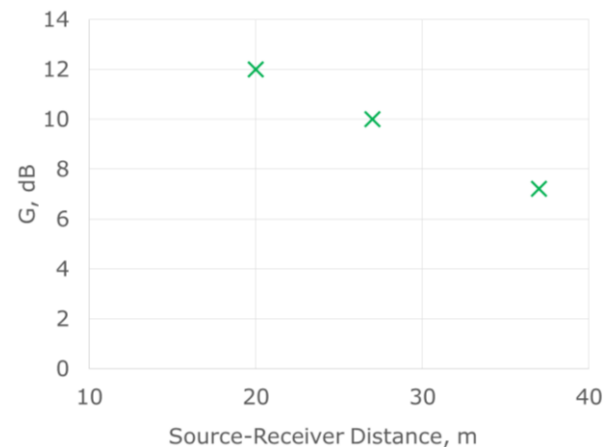


Figure 12: Measured results of StrenGth (G) at 1k Hz.

4.2 Analysis of the distribution of sound reflections

By taking advantage of the em32 Eigenmike® microphone's capabilities, panoramic sound maps were obtained for each source-receiver combination. Such maps are useful to understand the specific role of architectural elements interacting with sound, showing the direction of arrival of the sound reflections and their relative intensity.

The new elaboration technique involves the analysis of data obtained by a combination of an omnidirectional sound source, a multichannel microphone (i.e. em32 Eigenmike®) and a panoramic view (i.e. a 360° image represented in an equirectangular view), where the 32 microphone signals, recorded from each of the 32 capsules, have been processed by extracting 122 high directivity virtual microphones (with

8th order cardioid setup) spreading the directions uniformly distributed in the space (i.e. Spatial PCM Sampling (SPS) encoding) [16]. The beamformed multichannel IR has been divided into short frames, analysed singularly. For each frame, the amount of energy associated with each virtual microphone has been computed and then represented as a colour map overlay. The overall result is a video showing the sound waves arriving at the receiver from all the possible spherical directions.

The video has been realized by processing 2048 samples at 48 kHz sampling rate. Each virtual microphone required to sum the results obtained from the convolution of the 32 input channels with the 32 FIR filters. In order to elaborate a matrix given by the 32 virtual microphone outputs, combined with the FIR filters and having 2048 samples, a VST plugin (i.e. X-volver) was employed to facilitate the massive operation. A 32×32 filter matrix has been used for converting the signal coming from the 32 transducers of the microphone into the 32 SPS signals [20].

In order to have a right read of the following image, some guidance is briefly given. The sound pressure level having different ray energy is faithfully represented by the contour levels. The colour scale indicates that the sound waves having more energy are represented with red and warm colours, while the blue-violet and cold colours indicate a poor energy sound wave.

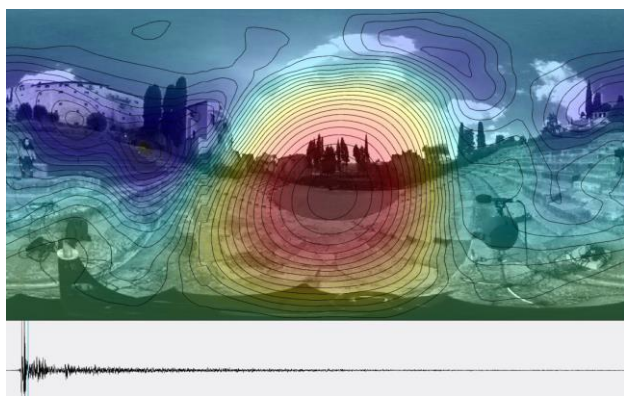


Figure 13: Acoustical map showing the arrival of a direct sound.

An example of the usefulness of such maps is given in Figure 13, which shows the sound coming from the source placed in the *proscenium* and arriving at the receiver placed in the *cavea*.

The stone of the steps composing the *cavea*, being a reflecting material, contributes to rising upward the reflections of the soundwaves, as the contour levels show laterally in Figure 14.

Other than the early reflections, Figure 14 shows also the late reflections coming from the floor of the orchestra, being as well in hard material (i.e. marble).

The acoustical maps, as shown above, demonstrate to be useful not only for understanding the direction of arrival of the sound rays but also to see how the sound wave is scattered based on the width of the coloured circles shown in the maps. As such, the wider is the circle, the more scattered is the sound wave. The sharper circles (e.g. related to the floor reflections) indicate a more directive sound wave.

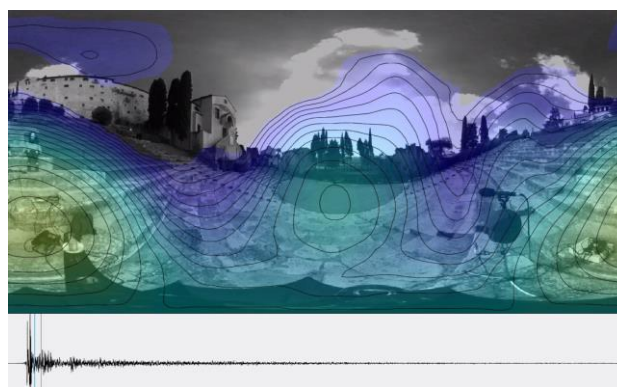


Figure 14: Acoustical map showing the reflections scattered onto the steps.

5 Conclusion

This work presents two types of analysis results about the acoustic survey undertaken in the ancient open-air Roman theatre of Verona. Measurements based on ISO 3382-1 were conducted in situ in unoccupied conditions using omnidirectional sound source and four types of microphones.

The first methodology indicates the results based on the standard configuration, which is composed of the graphs' representation. In particular, the theatre of Verona has been compared with the other two Roman theatres, that are in Benevento and Seville.

Following this approach, results obtained from the measurement campaign showed that the buildings surrounding the theatre of Verona exert their influence on the reverberant tail of the energy decay by undergoing many scattered reflections, which is more attenuated in Benevento and Seville. The energy parameters show an excess of clarity for music and high definition of the word, similar to what has been found in Benevento and Seville.

Regarding the strength of the theatre of Verona, historical studies [21] assume that the circular corridor (*praecinctio*) dividing *ima* and *summa cavea* interrupts the trend of a straight-line tangent to the edges of the steps, in order to follow the natural inclination of the hill. This footfall in terms of sound propagation means a shortened sound-receiver distance for the last row of seats and hence more energy at these receiver positions [22].

This study has been extended to analyse the specific path of sound reflections and relative directionality. By taking advantage of the abilities of the new microphone (i.e. em32 Eigenmike®), 3D sound maps are obtained for each source-receiver combination. Such maps indicate the direction of arrival of the sound reflections and their relative intensity, contributing to understanding the specific role of architectural elements interacting with the soundwave other than the magnitude of scattering based on the size of the contour levels.

Unfortunately, the role of the occupancy inside the theatre of Verona remains unexplored, because not measured. However, by literature [13] if it is assumed that the hypothetical roof of an open-air theatre could be considered as a surface area having a unitary absorption, the additional

sound absorption of the audience is not crucial in determining significant variations on the acoustic parameters, since the scattering effect is not substantial as in enclosed volumes.

In addition, further conjectures could be made upon the virtual reconstruction of the theatre of Verona at its initial shape, but this discussion shall be considered in future articles.

Acknowledgments

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THE ACOUSTICS OF THE CASSINO ROMAN THEATRE

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Résumé

Dans cet article, les caractéristiques acoustiques du théâtre romain de Cassino sont discutées. Le théâtre a été construit à l'époque impériale, puis, après les invasions barbares, il fut abandonné et détruit. Il a été reconstruit ces dernières années. Une source sonore placée sur la scène et dans l'orchestre a été utilisée et les caractéristiques acoustiques conformes à la norme ISO 3382 ont été mesurées. Le théâtre a un temps de réverbération court égal à 0,6 seconde car le mur de la scène n'a pas été reconstruit. Cependant, en saison estivale, le théâtre est utilisé pour des spectacles musicaux utilisant des systèmes d'amplification électro-acoustiques pour avoir une bonne acoustique

Mots clefs: théâtres antiques, temps de réverbération, scène, orchestre, cave, acoustique des salles.

Abstract

In this paper, the acoustic characteristics of the ancient Roman theatre of Cassino are discussed. The theatre was built during the Imperial Age and was abandoned and destroyed after the Barbaric invasions. The theatre has been rebuilt in recent years and it is currently used for summer events and performance. To measure the acoustic characteristics of this ancient theatre, the authors used a spherical omnidirectional sound source placed on the stage and in the orchestra. The results show that nowadays the theatre has a short reverberation time equal to 0.6 seconds due to the lack of the stage wall, which has not been rebuilt. The weak sound strength justifies the use of electro-acoustic amplification systems which during the summer season, are adopted to improve the acoustic experience in this ancient theatre.

Keywords: ancient theatres, reverberation time, archeoacoustics, scena, orchestra, cavea, room acoustics.

1 Introduction

In ancient times, theatrical buildings were built to provide performances with a better vision and listening conditions [1-3]. The theatres built in Greece were resting on the slope of a hill with a concentric stepped structure. This configuration improved the visual experience and allowed a better distribution of the sound. Vitruvius, in the ancient book "*De Architectura*", provides some rudimentary principles of architectural acoustics, which support many of the features found in ancient theatres [4-6]. To improve the acoustics, Vitruvius suggested to place vases (*echeia*) under the steps; this fascinating hypothesis, today finds applications with acoustic resonators used for correcting the acoustics of modern theatres. The acoustics of the ancient theatres was mainly due to the regular arrangement of the aligned semi-circular steps and to the regular geometries which acted as diffusing surfaces. The diffused sound field in ancient theatres guaranteed good acoustic conditions, as repetitively reported in recent studies [7, 8].

During the imperial period, more than a thousand theatres were built [9]. Theatres were not only buildings for performances as they were places for political and religious

meetings. In fact, all the cities of the Roman Empire had a theatre, and the richest citizens contributed financially to its construction. Theatrical performances were offered by rich men to gain the people's consent and political power.

Several measures were used to improve the acoustics of the theatres, such as covering the orchestra with square marble slabs, so to obtain a better diffusion of incident sound. The scena became a building with columns, stuccos, and plasters. The rows of columns, arranged on several levels, created diffusing surfaces that improved the propagation of sound. While the scena building was covered with a canopy to increase early reflections of sound towards the *cavea*. The presence of the scena building allowed a better distribution of the sound in the *cavea*. In fact, the voice of the actor was reflected by the scena building and then returned to the audience sitting in the *cavea*. The theatres were used during the summer season and to protect the spectators from the summer heat, the *cavea* was covered with awnings (*velaria*) [10]. The size of the scena building covered the maximum height of the *cavea* in order to enclose the scena and the *cavea* in a single body. Furthermore the size of the scena of Roman theatres was doubled compared to that of Greek theatres. Figure 1 shows a reconstruction of the scena, orchestra, and *cavea* of the ancient Roman theatre. In this paper the acoustic characteristics of Roman Theatre of Cassino are discussed.

The city of Cassino in Italy was very important during the Imperial Empire, because it was located along the most important communication routes with Rome. This explains

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the construction of important buildings such a large theatre and the amphitheatre inside the walls of the ancient city. Figure 2 shows the aerial view with evidence of the theatre and amphitheatre of Cassino by Google maps.

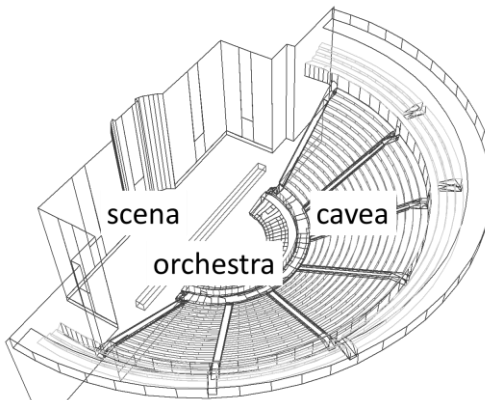


Figure 1: Main elements of the Roman theatre: the scena, the orchestra and the cavea.



Figure 2: Aerial view with the position of the theatre (left) and amphitheatre (right) in the current state by Google maps.

The Roman theatre of Cassino was built in the first century BC, during the Augustan period. The cavea stands on the slope of a hill and is oriented to the South - East. The ground plan and the orchestra are semi-circular. Subsequent historical events led it to being abandoned and demolished.

Figure 3 shows the ground plan of the theatre in current state, with the main dimension and the principal elements (scena, orchestra, and cavea).

While Figure 4 shows the ground plan of the theatre before the restoration (1900) in this period only few elements of the structures had been preserved; and after the restoration (2007) [11].

Figure 5 shows the theatre during the restoration works. The restoration involved only a few parts of the cavea and was completed in 2000. In its current state, the theatre has a semi-circular orchestra with a diameter of 10 m; the cavea with an external diameter of 56 m; and the scena of 5.0 m x 27.4 m. Only nineteen steps have been rebuilt, compared to the origin, in stone and mortar, with height of 0.40 m and depth of 0.70 m, so the cavea has a slope of 30°. The current capacity is about 1,000 spectators.

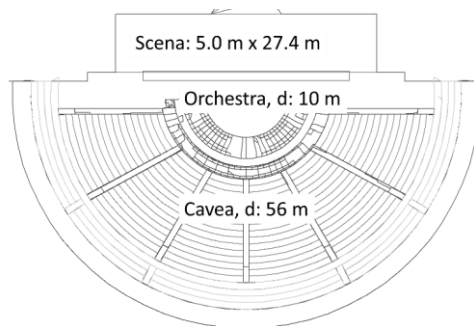


Figure 3: Ground plan of the theatre in the current state, with the main dimension and the principal elements (scena, orchestra, cavea).

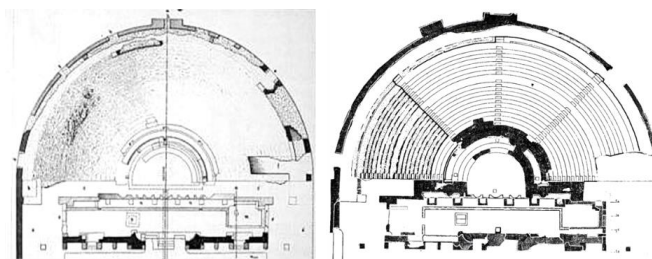


Figure 4: Ground plan of the theatre before the restoration work (left) in 1900, and after the restoration (right) in 2007 [11].

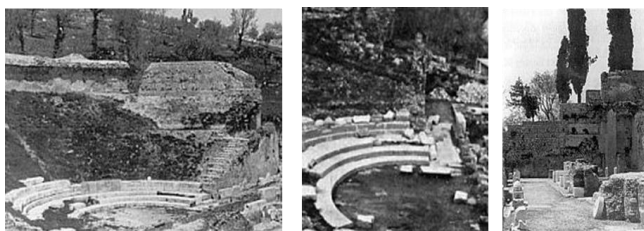


Figure 5: The theatre during the restoration work [11].

Figures 6 and 7 show the side and front view of the theatre in its current state respectively [12].



Figure 6: Front view of the theatre in the current state.

2 Acoustic measurements

To evaluate the acoustic characteristics of the theatre, acoustic measurements were carried out in accordance with literature practice [13] and the standard ISO 3382 [14]. A spherical omnidirectional sound source was placed on the scena at a height of 1.5 m from the floor, in the actor position.



Figure 7: Side view of the theatre in the current state.

The sound source was fed with a MLS signal, by impulse response technique. The acoustic procedure and the post processing methodology were similar to those used to study other theatres [15-20]. The impulse response was detected with an omnidirectional microphone (GRAS 40 AR endowed with the preamplifier 01 dB PRE 12 H) placed at a height of 1.2 m. The receiving points were placed on the I, V, IX, XV and XIX steps, in order to obtain information from varying distances from the sound source, along the three radial directions in the cavea. Figure 8 shows the position of the sound source on the scena, and the receiver points in the cavea set out along three radial directions. The distances of the receiver points from the sound source on the scena were: I step 13 m; V step 17 m; IX step 19 m; XV step 23 m and XIX step 27 m.

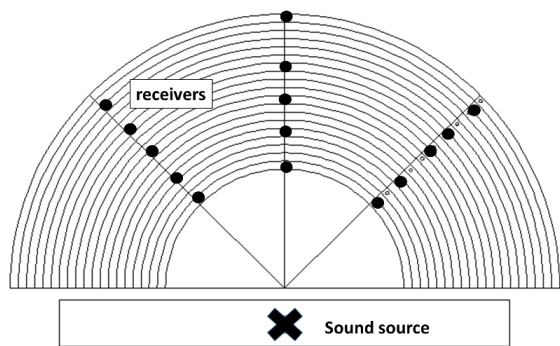


Figure 8: Position of the sound source (X) on the scena and the five receivers (•) in the cavea.

During the acoustic measurements, the theatre was empty; the measured noise level was equal 35 dBA. Figures 9 shows the sound source on the scena during the acoustic measurements. The impulse responses were analysed with the software Dirac 4.0. The acoustic parameters defined in the standard ISO 3382 that were analyzed are the reverberation time (T_{30}), early decay time (EDT), sound strength (G), clarity (C_{80}), definition (D_{50}), and sound transmission index (STI).

While Figure 10 shows the sound source on the scena and measurement microphones in the cavea for the measurement of G (strength, dB), for a total of ten receivers.



Figure 9: Sound source on the scena during the measurements.

The typical suggested values of the different monaural acoustic parameters for both speech comprehension and music listening are discussed in [21]:

- T_{30} should assume values below 1.0 second for a clear perception of speech, while it could assume values around 2.0 seconds for music listening preference;
- C_{80} should have a higher value if the goal is to separate initial sounds from diffuse ones, making discrete sounds stand apart from each other. In a sound field which is not completely diffuse, C_{80} is uncorrelated to reverberation time. For the purposes of good listening conditions of music, it is generally reported that C_{80} should be in a range between -2 dB and 2 dB, while it is expected to be above 2 dB if speech perception is a priority;
- D_{50} may assume values from 0 to 1.0, but for a good speech comprehension, it should have values above 0.5;
- STI represents the degree of the amplitude modulation in a speech signal, with them both referring to the distortion in speech signals caused by reverberation, echoes, and background noise. Values of STI greater than 0.5 represent favorable speech intelligibility conditions.

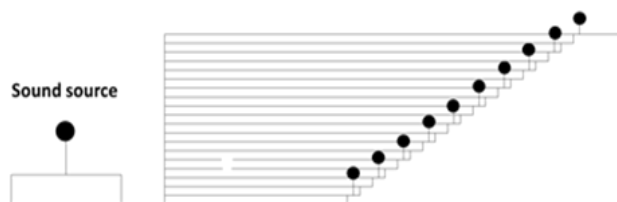


Figure 10: Sound source on the scena and measurement microphones in the cavea for the measurement of G, for a total of ten receivers.

Table 1 shows a synthesis of the optimal acoustic values for different listening conditions.

Table 1: Optimal acoustic parameter values for different listening conditions.

Parameters	EDT, s	T_{30} , s	C_{80} , dB	D_{50}
Values for musical performances	$1.8 < EDT < 2.6$	$1.6 < T_{30} < 2.2$	$-2 < C_{80} < 2$	< 0.5
Values for speech performances	1.0	$0.8 < T_{30} < 1.2$	> 2	> 0.5

3 Acoustic results

For the fifteen receivers, with the sound source on the scena: Figure 11 shows the average measured values of T30 with the standard deviation; Figure 12 shows the average measured values of EDT, with the standard deviation; Figure 13 shows the average measured values of C80, with the standard deviation; Figure 14 shows the average measured values of D50, with the standard deviation. The measured values confirm that the lack of a roof and backstage wall led to a few sound reflections with short reverberation time, as highlighted in values below 0.5 second of T30. The average value of C80 is equal to 13 dB, while the average value D50 is equal to 0.9. The STI is equal to 0.85 [22-26]. Acoustic measurements show that the theatre, in the actual configuration, cannot be used for opera or symphonic music, since the scena, with no rear wall, prevents any sound reflections, and the listeners only perceive the direct sound. To improve acoustics of the theatre, some screens should be installed at rear of the scena, so as to allow for sound reflection. Figure 15 shows the impulse response on step VII with the effects of the multiple reflections due to the diffraction on the sound on the steps.

The multi-reflections of the sound generate a diffusion of the incident sound in all directions, distributing the sound field evenly. Each edge of the steps emit a sound like a secondary sound source. The seats are regular surfaces so are an acoustic filter that passes sound coming from the scena at the expense of surrounding noise.

In open-air theatres, the parameter G (strength, dB) assumes a special significance for the assessment of acoustics. G represents the subjective level of sound and it is defined as the gain from sound pressure level, which is produced by the same spherical omnidirectional sound source, with the same power level (L_w), in a free field at a distance of 10 m from the sound source. To measure the acoustic parameter G, the spherical omnidirectional sound source was calibrated and the sound power level L_w (dB) was measured through the “substitution method” with an reference sound source. The procedure consists of a comparison of the sound pressure level in octave band of a noise source under test with those of the calibrated reference sound source. The reference sound source consists of a centrifugal fan driven by a powerful asynchronous motor type B&K 4204 [27, 28].

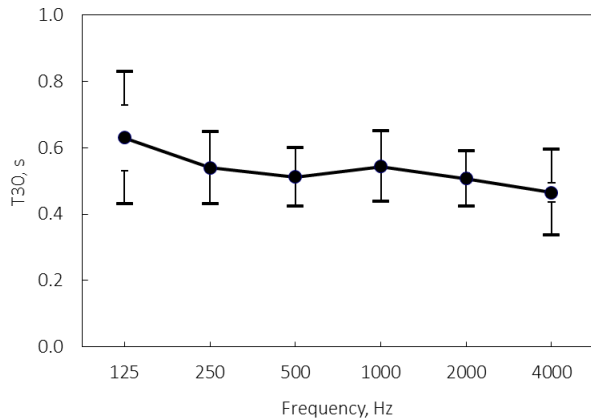


Figure 11: Average values and relative standard deviations of T30.

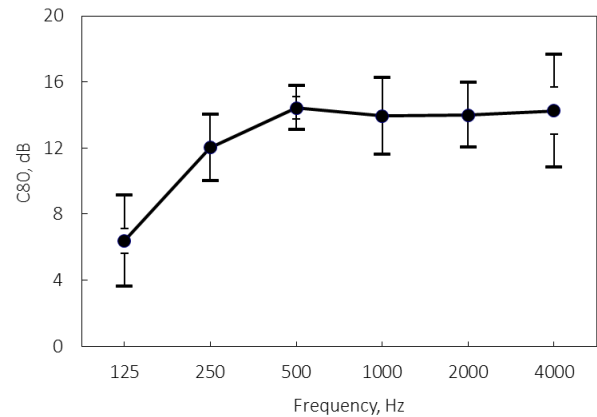


Figure 13: Average values and relative standard deviations of C80.

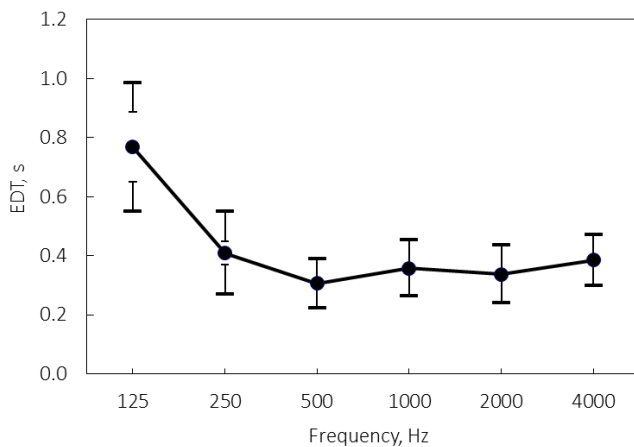


Figure 12: Average values and relative standard deviations of EDT.

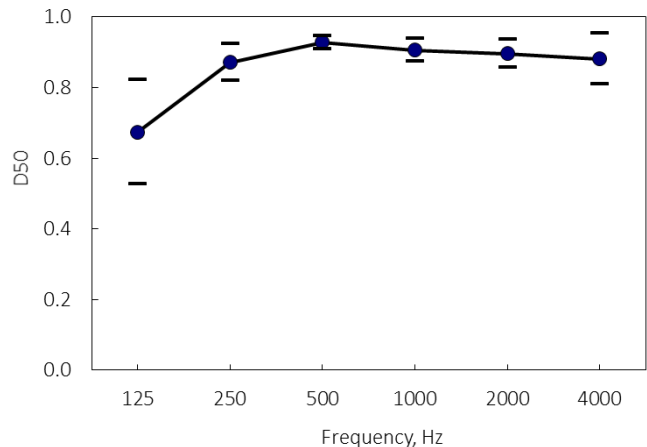


Figure 14: Average values and relative standard deviations of D50.

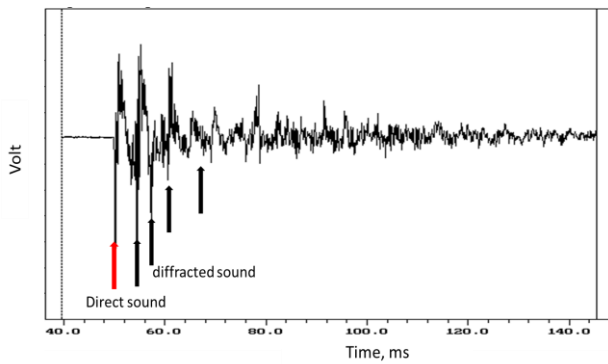


Figure 15: Impulse response on step VII, multi reflections are due to the diffraction on the sound on the steps.

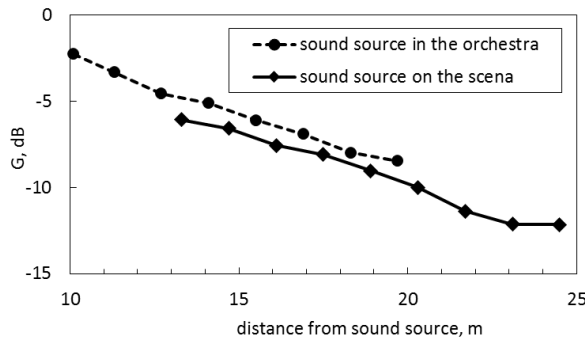


Figure 16: Average value of G along the cavea, with the sound source on the scena and in the orchestra.

The calibration procedures were carried out in a closed large room, and than the set-up was preserved. With the same Lw “calibration” set-up, the sound source was feed during the measurements in the theatre. The acoustic parameter G (strength, dB) was calculated with the following formula:

$$G = L_p - L_w + 31 \text{ (dB)}$$

where L_p (dB) is the sound pressure level detected in the cavea along on the ten steps (Figure 10). L_w (dB) is the sound power level of the spherical sound source. Figure 16 shows the average values of the G, measured along the three directions in the cavea, when the spherical sound source is placed on the scena and in the orchestra.

Based on the sampled results, the spatial distributions of the acoustic parameters were obtained in the cavea. Figure 17 shows the map of T30 at the frequency of 1000 Hz. The reverberation is very low and does not exceed 1.0 second due to the absence of reflective surfaces, while slightly increase only in the upper part of the cavea. Then Figure 17 shows the map of C80 at the frequency of 1000 Hz. Finally, Figure 17 shows the map of D50 at the frequency of 1000 Hz, in the theatre, approaches the unit value. However, with modest variations, the average spatial distribution suggests that the theatre has excellent behaviour for speech understanding [29].

The spatial distribution of the acoustic characteristics is not uniform. In the reconstruction of the theatre some walls are taller than others and this effect generates non-symmetrical sound reflections, resulting in an uneven spatial distribution.

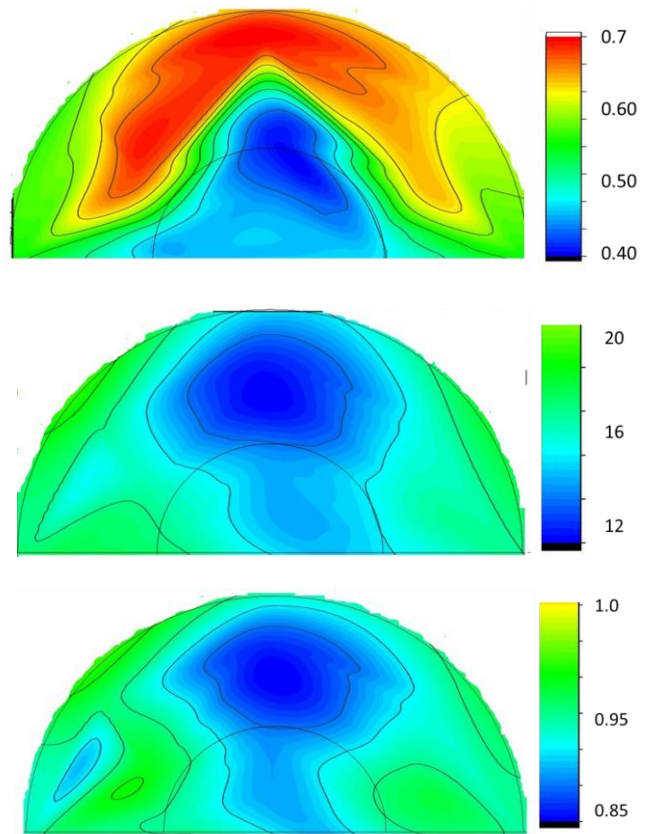


Figure 17: Maps (top to down) of T30 (s), C80 (dB), and D50 at the frequency of 1000 Hz.

4. Discussion

In order to assess the acoustic characteristics of the theatre of Cassino in the actual configuration, a comparison was conducted with the acoustic parameters measured in empty conditions into the open-air theatres of Pompeii (large theatre and Odeon), Benevento, Posillipo, Taormina, Segesta and Siracusa [30-35]. The average values of the monaural parameters at the mid-frequency bands of 500 Hz and 1.0 kHz are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Acoustic parameters averaged at mid-frequency bands of 500 Hz and 1.0 kHz measured in some ancient theatres in empty conditions.

Theatres	T ₃₀ [s]	C ₈₀ [dB]	D ₅₀ [-]	Cavea diameter [m]
Benevento	0.9	8.0	0.78	93
Cassino	0.6	19.0	0.91	53
Pompeii (large theatre)	0.9	6.0	0.70	60
Pompeii (Odeon)	1.0	9.5	0.8	30
Posillipo	1.1	3.0	0.70	47
Taormina	1.9	1.17	0.53	110
Segesta	0.5	16.0	0.90	63
Siracusa	1.2	13.0	0.90	140

From the comparison with the other reconstructed open type theatres, the Cassino theatre has the shortest reverberation time, due to the geometric characteristics. The cavea has not been completely rebuilt, so even the scena building walls have not been rebuilt. The absence of reflective surfaces does not generate a reverberant field. The theatre has few sound

reflections, for its current use, all the events involving the use of sound amplification with loudspeakers. A possible solution to improve the acoustics of the theatre would be the installation of temporary structures of high-density PVC sheets with reflective characteristics, so that the sound incident on the sheets can be sent back into the cavea.

5. Conclusions

The paper reports the acoustic measurements in the Roman theatre of Cassino. The theatre has been partially rebuilt and it is nowadays used for theatrical performances. The acoustic measurements show that the absence of reflective surfaces, such as the walls of the scena building, makes the acoustics insufficient. In fact, the values of the reverberation time do not exceed 1.0 second, and also it is measured a low sound strength value (G, dB). Nowadays during modern performances, sound amplification systems with loudspeakers are used. Not surprisingly, the historical atmosphere and the suggestion of these places make the listener forget the acoustic limits of these theatres or the diffuse use of loudspeakers. However, there is no doubt about the fascination of performance in these theatres that attract a large number of spectators inside the cavea of the ancient theatre. So, the recovery of the ancient theatres allows these buildings to be the cultural centre of the shows in the summer season.

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CHANGES IN THE PREVALENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HEARING LOSS IN A NOISE-EXPOSED POPULATION BETWEEN 1980 AND 2015

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Résumé

La mise à jour des réglementations, l'amélioration de la réduction du bruit et l'utilisation accrue des dispositifs de protection auditive (PA) peuvent permettre aux travailleurs exposés au bruit de mieux entendre. Dans une étude de cohorte rétrospective (1980-2015), nous avons effectué une analyse secondaire d'une base de données de tests auditifs annuels effectués sur des travailleurs exposés au bruit âgés de 20 à 55 ans. La taille de l'échantillon par cohorte variait de n=1386 à n=5165. Aucune différence de cohorte cliniquement significative dans les seuils de 5 dB ou plus n'a été trouvée pour les 20 ou 30 ans. Pour les 45 et 55 ans, les cohortes nées plus tard avaient de meilleurs seuils que les cohortes nées plus tôt. La prévalence de la perte auditive a diminué pour les cohortes nées plus tard pour les 30, 45 et 55 ans. Les jeunes de 20 ans dans les cohortes ultérieures étaient plus susceptibles d'utiliser des PA que ceux des cohortes antérieures. La prévalence plus faible de la perte auditive et les seuils plus élevés chez ces travailleurs exposés au bruit peuvent être dus à l'utilisation accrue des appareils de protection auditive, aux changements de la réglementation sur le lieu de travail, à l'amélioration du contrôle du bruit sur le lieu de travail ou à l'évolution des attitudes à l'égard de l'exposition au bruit dans les loisirs.

Mots clefs : Perte auditive due au bruit ; longitudinal ; protection auditive ; travailleurs ; prévalence, Colombie britannique

Abstract

Updated regulations, improved noise reduction, and increased use of hearing protective devices (HPDs) may result in better hearing for noise-exposed workers. In a retrospective (1980-2015) cohort study, we conducted a secondary analysis of a database of annual hearing tests from noise-exposed workers aged 20-55 years old. Sample size per cohort ranged from n=1386 to n=5165. No clinically-meaningful cohort differences in thresholds of 5 dB or greater were found for 20- or 30-year olds. For 45- and 55-year olds, later-born cohorts had better thresholds than earlier-born cohorts. Prevalence of hearing loss decreased for later-born cohorts for 30, 45, and 55-year olds. Twenty-year olds in later cohorts were more likely to use HPD than those in earlier cohorts. The lower prevalence of hearing loss and better thresholds in these noise-exposed workers may be due to increased HPD use, changes in workplace regulations, improved workplace noise control, or changed attitudes towards recreational noise exposure.

Keywords: Noise-induced hearing loss; longitudinal; hearing protection; workers; prevalence; British Columbia

1 Introduction

Hearing loss is the most common sensory deficit in older adults and is recognized to be a global social and health problem [1]. Untreated hearing loss of a moderate or greater degree affects communication and can contribute to social isolation, depression, and poorer job performance [2, 3]. Additionally, the damage associated with significant noise exposure leads to disabling hearing problems beyond audiometric changes, such as difficulties hearing in noise, tinnitus, and hyperacusis [4, 5]. Both age-related hearing loss (ARHL), and noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), contribute significantly to the prevalence of hearing loss, particularly among older adults, with NIHL considered to be the most common

occupational disease [6]. Forty percent of working-age Canadians reported noise exposure that would be considered hazardous at some time during their working lives [7], with worldwide studies indicating that the prevalence of work-related hearing loss ranges from 16-24% [8].

For decades, the World Health Organization has raised concerns that NIHL is on the rise due to recreational and industrial noise [9-11]; however, some researchers have noted that prevalence of hearing loss is decreasing in the general population, particularly in men [12]. Changes in noise control and hearing conservation strategies in noisy industries may contribute to this noted reduction in hearing loss. Though results are mixed [13], there is evidence that changes in legislation and focus on hearing loss prevention through engineered noise controls [14], and properly fitted hearing protection [15], ultimately reduce the level of noise exposure. These strategies, along with education and awareness to employers and workers, and regular hearing surveillance with one to one

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counselling, might reduce the effects of occupational noise on hearing thresholds [16].

In British Columbia, an occupational regulation requiring hearing protection in hazardous noise has been in place since 1967, with more extensive Noise Control and Hearing Conservation programs implemented in 1978 [17]. Since that time, particularly with changes to the relevant WCB Occupational Health and Safety Regulations in 1996 [18], there has been an increased focus on education and awareness of workers and employers along with inspection and enforcement to increase compliance. It is important to understand whether these efforts have the intended result of reducing the incidence of occupational NIHL. Though there have been longitudinal studies looking at changes in hearing, most have results spanning 10 years or fewer [2, 4, 19]. Davies et al [20] specifically studied lumber mill workers' hearing test results from 1970-1996, and found that over time, the risk of shift in hearing thresholds decreased, suggesting that Hearing Conservation Programs are effective. Other than this study, we are not aware of research investigating a noise-exposed Canadian population, and none that examine the impact of new regulations introduced in British Columbia in 1996.

Audiometry is typically conducted to monitor and flag early signs of NIHL. Since 1978, employers in British Columbia must provide annual hearing tests to workers who are exposed to occupational noise that exceeds criterion levels. This allows authorities to monitor for early flags for NIHL; that is, significant changes in thresholds at the frequencies first affected by noise: 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. In 1979 almost 78,000 tests were submitted to WorkSafeBC annually and in 2018 this had risen to 178,000 tests. The hearing test results spanning over 40 years are maintained in a database ("Industrial Audiometric System"). By examining the data available from these hearing tests, we can address questions regarding changes in NIHL over time in individuals and across cohorts to determine whether NIHL is indeed on rise, or whether greater awareness of noise in the workplace has been successful at reducing NIHL in Canada.

The purpose of this retrospective cohort study is to analyze existing cross-sectional and longitudinal data in a large database spanning forty years, to determine whether there are cohort effects in prevalence and progression of noise-induced hearing loss. This study builds on the research of Davies et al [20] by expanding to include all noisy industries and data from 1980 to 2015. This data set will allow us to see effects of revised and additional regulations introduced in 1996 and provide current data on the prevalence of hearing loss and characteristics of hearing thresholds in an age-stratified noise-exposed population in Canada. For the purpose of this study, 5 cohorts were selected with birth years in 1935, 1960, 1970, 1985 and 1995. We compared the prevalence, degree, and configuration of hearing loss in 4 age groups (20, 30, 45, and 55-year olds) in different test years to determine whether there are age and cohort effects on hearing.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were individuals born in 1935, 1960, 1970, 1985, and 1995 who received a hearing test in British Columbia as part of an occupational hearing conservation program in at least one of the four test years of interest: 1980, 1990, 2005, 2015. The sample size for each cohort and test year varied as a function of the total number of tests available and is reported in Table 1. The de-identified hearing test results were obtained from WorkSafeBC's Data Warehouse which is populated by nightly extracts of data from the Industrial Audiometric source database. The data were derived using Tableau Developer Visualization software and presented to the researchers as an Excel spreadsheet.

Table 1: Sample size as a function of cohort and test year.

Year of birth	Year of hearing test			
	1980	1990	2005	2015
Cohort 1 (born 1935)	Age 45 n=1386	Age 55 n=2124		
Cohort 2 (born 1960)	Age 20 n=2165	Age 30 n=5165	Age 45 n=4558	Age 55 n=4158
Cohort 3 (born 1970)		Age 20 n=2326		Age 45 n=3764
Cohort 4 (born 1985)			Age 20 n=2495	Age 30 n=3949
Cohort 5 (born 1995)				Age 20 n=2322

A Privacy Impact Assessment was reviewed and approved by WorkSafeBC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy office to ensure that no individual could be identified from the results. No names, other identification, or demographic information were included in the data provided to the researchers. Informed consent was not needed for this analysis. Ethical approval was received from UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

Hearing test results were obtained from the WorkSafeBC database according to Table 1. For each cohort, results were gathered for each birth year, and then filtered for any tests in the chosen year. For example, Cohort 3's results were formed from test results for those born in 1970 and hearing test results in 1990 and 2015. All available hearing tests that met the criteria were included in the dataset. Because data were obtained based on birth year, not age at time of test, there is a one-year range of possible ages for each cohort/ test year. For example, individuals born in 1960 and tested in 1980 could be either 19 years of age (if tested prior to their birthday) or 20 years of age (if tested after their birthday). For ease of reporting, age at time of testing is reported as test year minus birth year, regardless of actual age. The sample size (i.e., number of tests available) for each cohort and test year is given in the table.

2.2 Procedures

All hearing tests were conducted by technicians trained to follow a testing protocol and collected in facilities meeting minimum standards set out by WorkSafeBC in accordance with

CSA Z107.6 [21]. Air-conducted pure-tone thresholds were recorded for 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 6000, and 8000 Hz in each ear. At the time of the test, answers to questions about workers' noise history and the type of hearing protection device worn, if any, were recorded. The results were submitted to WorkSafeBC and stored in a database ("Industrial Audiometric database"). The data in this study were extracted from this database.

2.3 Data analysis

Data analysis was run in R version 3.5.1 [22]. Means and standard deviation were calculated for pure-tone thresholds for each frequency and compared for people at the same age from different birth cohorts. Comparisons were made based on clinically meaningful effect sizes (i.e., more than 5 dB change in mean thresholds across cohorts), rather than null hypothesis significance testing. With thousands of cases per cohort, all clinically meaningful differences would also be statistically significant based on conventional null hypothesis significance testing. For changes in pure-tone thresholds, only data from the left ear were used in the analysis.

To determine prevalence of hearing loss in the sample, we used a speech frequency pure-tone average (PTA) based on thresholds at 0.5, 1, 2, and 4 kHz consistent with Canadian Health Measures Survey [23]. Hearing loss was considered present if the PTA of either ear was poorer than 25 dB HL. Chi-squared tests were used to compare prevalence of hearing loss among people of the same age from different birth cohorts. If there was evidence of significant differences, additional pairwise comparisons were made between successive birth cohorts.

Chi-squared tests were also used to examine differences in the use of hearing protection among 20-year olds from different birth cohorts. If the test indicated significant differences across the four birth cohorts, a series of pairwise comparisons between successive cohorts was conducted.

3 Results

3.1 Data quality checks

The data were checked for errors or invalid results; using the rule that any thresholds better than 0 dB HL or poorer than 120 dB HL should be considered invalid given the limits of the audiometers used in testing, 11 hearing tests were dropped from the analysis. Some individuals had more than one hearing test per year, which can happen if, for example, the worker was at multiple job sites, or changed location of employment over the year. When this occurred, only the first hearing test per year was used in the analysis.

3.2 Hearing thresholds by age and cohort

Is the hearing of 20-year-olds different in 1980, 1990, 2005, and 2015?

In comparing the hearing of 20-year olds from different cohorts, we focused on the high frequencies 2000, 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz in particular. As mentioned, given the large

sample size, even small differences could be statistically significant, so we instead chose a clinically-meaningful effect of a difference of at least 5 dB between cohorts. At these frequencies of interest, group differences were all less than 5 dB, indicating no difference in hearing of 20-year-olds from different cohorts. Thresholds for this cohort at all audiometric frequencies, along with the 95% confidence intervals, are given in Table 2 and Figure 1.

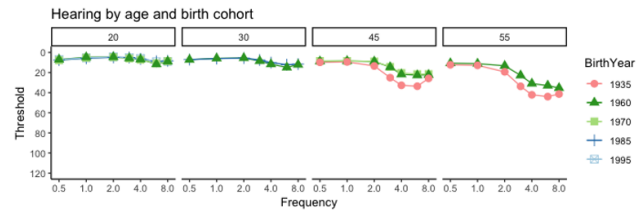


Figure 1: Threshold means and 95% confidence intervals of the mean for each cohort (separate lines) and each age group (separate panels). Note that the 95% CIs are small relative to the scale of the standard audiogram. Refer to Tables 2-5 for details of the CIs.

Table 2: Observed threshold means by cohort and frequency for 20-year olds

Freq. [Hz]	Cohort	N	Mean	sd	95% CI [LL,UL]
500	1960	2165	7.0	7.1	[6.7, 7.3]
	1970	2326	7.8	7.4	[7.5, 8.1]
	1985	2495	7.5	6.3	[7.3, 7.7]
	1995	2322	7.1	6.5	[6.8, 7.3]
1000	1960	2165	4.7	7.2	[4.3, 5.0]
	1970	2326	5.4	7.6	[5.1, 5.7]
	1985	2495	5.8	6.3	[5.6, 6.0]
	1995	2322	5.3	6.0	[5.1, 5.5]
2000	1960	2165	4.5	7.5	[4.2, 4.8]
	1970	2326	4.7	8.3	[4.3, 5.0]
	1985	2495	4.9	6.3	[4.6, 5.2]
	1995	2322	4.4	6.3	[4.1, 4.7]
3000	1960	2165	5.7	8.9	[5.3, 6.1]
	1970	2326	6.0	9.5	[5.6, 6.4]
	1985	2495	5.0	7.2	[4.7, 5.3]
	1995	2322	5.2	7.1	[4.9, 5.5]
4000	1960	2165	6.8	10.0	[6.4, 7.2]
	1970	2326	7.3	10.4	[6.9, 7.7]
	1985	2495	6.4	8.2	[6.0, 6.7]
	1995	2322	5.9	7.7	[5.6, 6.2]
6000	1960	2165	11.6	12.2	[11.1, 12.1]
	1970	2326	10.9	11.5	[10.4, 11.4]
	1985	2495	8.8	9.6	[8.4, 9.2]
	1995	2322	9.2	9.8	[8.8, 9.6]
8000	1960	2165	8.8	12.2	[8.3, 9.3]
	1970	2326	8.6	10.7	[8.2, 9.0]
	1985	2495	8.3	9.7	[7.9, 8.7]
	1995	2322	9.0	9.7	[8.6, 9.4]

Is the hearing of 30-year-olds different in 1990 and 2015?

In comparing the hearing of 30-year olds from different cohorts, we again focused on the high frequencies 2000, 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. Again, we chose a clinically-meaningful

effect of a difference of at least 5 dB between cohorts. At these frequencies of interest, group differences were all less than 5 dB, indicating no difference in hearing of 30-year-olds between the two cohorts. Thresholds for this cohort at all audiometric frequencies, along with the 95% confidence intervals, are given in Table 3 and Figure 1.

Table 3: Observed threshold means by cohort and frequency for 30-year olds.

Freq. [Hz]	Cohort	N	Mean	sd	95% CI [LL,UL]
500	1960	5165	7.2	7.5	[7.0, 7.4]
	1985	3949	7.1	7.2	[6.9, 7.3]
1000	1960	5165	5.9	7.7	[5.7, 6.1]
	1985	3949	6.1	7.3	[5.9, 6.3]
2000	1960	5165	5.5	8.5	[5.3, 5.7]
	1985	3949	5.5	7.8	[5.3, 5.7]
3000	1960	5165	8.4	11.1	[8.1, 8.7]
	1985	3949	7.5	9.6	[7.2, 7.8]
4000	1960	5165	11.7	13.5	[11.3, 12.1]
	1985	3949	10.1	11.0	[9.8, 10.4]
6000	1960	5165	14.9	13.9	[14.5, 15.3]
	1985	3949	12.2	12.0	[11.8, 12.6]
8000	1960	5165	12.1	13.2	[11.7, 12.5]
	1985	3949	11.6	12.1	[11.2, 12.0]

Is the hearing of 45-year-olds different in 1980, 2005, and 2015?

In comparing the hearing of 45-year olds from different cohorts, we again focused on the high frequencies 2000, 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. As with the previous cohorts, given the large sample size, even small differences could be statistically significant so instead we chose a clinically-meaningful effect of a difference of at least 5 dB between cohorts. The group differences at 2000 Hz were smaller than 5 dB, indicating no meaningful difference in thresholds across cohorts. At 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz, the 1935 cohort had thresholds that were 10 dB or more poorer than the 1960 and 1970 cohort, which demonstrates a clinically-meaningful improvement in thresholds for later cohorts. Thresholds for this cohort at all audiometric frequencies, along with the 95% confidence intervals, are given in Table 4 and Figure 1

Is the hearing of 55-year-olds different in 1990 and 2015?

In comparing the hearing of 55-year olds from different cohorts, we again focused on the high frequencies 2000, 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. and chose a clinically-meaningful effect of a difference of at least 5 dB between cohorts. The group differences at all frequencies of interest were at least 5 dB, and greater than 10 dB at 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. The 1935 cohort had thresholds that were poorer than the 1960 cohort, which demonstrates a clinically-meaningful improvement in thresholds for the later cohort. Thresholds for this cohort at all audiometric frequencies, along with the 95% confidence intervals, are given in Table 5 and Figure 1.

Table 4: Observed threshold means by cohort and frequency for 45-year olds

Freq. [Hz]	Cohort	N	Mean	sd	95% CI [LL,UL]
500	1935	1386	9.8	10.6	[9.2, 10.4]
	1960	4558	8.8	8.5	[8.6, 9.0]
	1970	3764	8.4	8.3	[8.1, 8.7]
1000	1935	1386	9.4	11.5	[8.8, 10.0]
	1960	4558	8.4	9.0	[8.1, 8.7]
	1970	3764	8.5	8.8	[8.2, 8.8]
2000	1935	1386	13.4	15.5	[12.6, 14.2]
	1960	4558	9.0	10.3	[8.7, 9.3]
	1970	3764	8.9	10.2	[8.6, 9.2]
3000	1935	1386	25.1	20.6	[24.0, 26.2]
	1960	4558	14.6	14.8	[14.2, 15.0]
	1970	3764	14.3	13.9	[13.9, 14.7]
4000	1935	1386	32.7	20.9	[31.6, 33.8]
	1960	4558	21.7	17.1	[21.2, 22.2]
	1970	3764	20.4	16.2	[19.8, 20.9]
6000	1935	1386	33.6	21.3	[32.5, 34.7]
	1960	4558	22.7	17.0	[22.2, 23.2]
	1970	3764	21.5	16.2	[21.0, 22.0]
8000	1935	1386	25.8	22.4	[24.6, 27.0]
	1960	4558	22.3	17.9	[21.8, 22.8]
	1970	3764	21.5	17.3	[20.9, 22.1]

Table 5: Observed threshold means by cohort and frequency for 55-year olds.

Freq. [Hz]	Cohort	N	Mean	sd	95% CI [LL,UL]
500	1935	2124	12.3	11.3	[11.8, 12.8]
	1960	4158	10.7	9.8	[10.4, 11.0]
1000	1935	2124	12.8	12.6	[12.3, 13.3]
	1960	4158	11.1	11.0	[10.8, 11.4]
2000	1935	2124	19.3	18.0	[18.5, 20.0]
	1960	4158	13.2	12.8	[12.8, 13.6]
3000	1935	2124	33.7	21.5	[32.3, 34.6]
	1960	4158	22.8	18	[22.3, 23.3]
4000	1935	2124	42.1	21.2	[41.2, 43.0]
	1960	4158	30.9	19.1	[30.3, 31.5]
6000	1935	2124	43.9	21.8	[43.0, 44.8]
	1960	4158	32.9	19.4	[32.3, 33.5]
8000	1935	2124	41.4	23.0	[40.4, 42.4]
	1960	4158	35.3	21.5	[34.6, 36.0]

3.3 Prevalence of hearing loss in each cohort by age

We compared the prevalence of hearing loss for each age, that is 20-year-olds, 30-year-olds, 45-year-olds and 55-year-olds, across birth cohorts to determine if there was a significant

difference based on the year of birth. The results are displayed in Figure 2 with the chi-square analysis given in Appendix A.

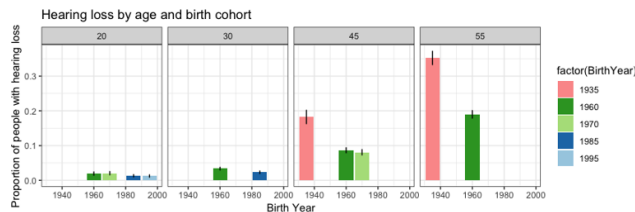


Figure 2: Proportion of sample with hearing loss and 95% confidence intervals of the proportion estimate for each cohort (separate bars) and each age group (separate panels).

20-year olds

We had four cohorts of 20-year-olds, those who were born in 1960, 1970, 1995 and 2005, and found that there were no significant differences in the prevalence of hearing loss in 20-year olds born in those years. ($X^2 = 7.59$, $df = 3$, $p = .055$).

30-year olds

When we compared 30-year-olds from two birth cohorts, born in 1960 and born in 1985, there were significant differences observed in the prevalence of hearing loss among 30-year olds from different birth cohorts ($X^2 = 8.51$, $df = 1$, $p = .004$). People born in 1960 were more likely to have hearing loss by age 30 (3.37%) compared to people born in 1985 (2.33%).

45-year olds

There were significant differences observed in the prevalence of hearing loss among 45-year olds from different birth cohorts ($X^2 = 131.08$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). People born in 1935 were more likely to have hearing loss by age 45 (18.24%) compared to people born in either 1960 (8.66%, $X^2 = 100.53$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) or 1970 (8.06%, $X^2 = 108.441$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). There were no significant differences in the prevalence of hearing loss observed among 45-year olds born in 1960 compared to those born in 1970 ($X^2 = 0.902$, $df = 1$, $p = .342$).

55-year olds

There were significant differences observed in the prevalence of hearing loss among 55-year olds from different birth cohorts ($X^2 = 200.9$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). People born in 1935 were more likely to have hearing loss by age 55 (35.22%) compared to people born in 1960 (18.99%).

3.4 What proportion of 20-year-olds wear hearing protection?

Table 6 shows that there were significant differences observed in the use of hearing protection among 20-year olds from different birth cohorts ($X^2 = 549.9$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$). Use of hearing protection was least prevalent among 20-years old born in 1970 (58.68%), with significantly higher rates observed in the preceding cohort born in 1960 (65.22%, $X^2 =$

20.291, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and the subsequent cohorts born in 1985 (80.45%, $X^2 = 271.32$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and 1995 ($X^2 = 405.71$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

Table 6: Results of the chi-square analysis comparing proportion of reported hearing protection use in 20-year-olds across cohorts. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons are given when appropriate to do so.

Birth Year	N	Proportion reporting "Yes" to using HPD	Pairwise comparisons
1960	2165	65.22%	1960 vs 1970: $X = 20.291$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$ 1960 vs 1985: $X = 137.63$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$ 1960 vs 1995: $X = 242.97$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$
1970	2326	58.68%	1970 vs 1985: $X = 271.32$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$ 1970 vs 1995: $X = 405.71$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$
1985	2496	80.45%	1985 vs 1995: $X = 19.25$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$
1995	2322	85.23%	

There were also significant differences when comparing those born in 1960 to later cohorts born in 1985 ($X^2 = 137.63$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and 1995 ($X^2 = 242.97$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Use of hearing protection was most common in the most recent cohort of 20-year olds, such that a greater proportion of 20-year olds born in 1995 reported using hearing protection compared to those born in 1985 ($X^2 = 19.25$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) or any of the earlier cohorts.

4 Discussion

In this retrospective cohort study examining changes in hearing and thresholds from 1980-2015 in noise-exposed workers, we found that hearing thresholds generally improved with later cohorts, prevalence of hearing loss decreased, and HPD use increased. Specifically, for 45- and 55-year olds, later-born cohorts had better thresholds than earlier-born cohorts, with no change in thresholds across cohorts for 20- or 30-year olds. Prevalence of hearing loss decreased for later-born cohorts for 30, 45, and 55-year olds. Twenty-year olds in later cohorts were more likely to use HPD than those in earlier cohorts.

It is of interest to understand these changes in hearing. While our secondary analysis of an existing database is unable to determine the reason for the change, we consider several potential factors, including changes in how hearing was tested over time, changes in provincial regulations regarding safe noise exposure, changes in recreational noise exposure, improved use of engineering controls (and other) in noisy workplaces, and finally, increased use of HPDs.

First, we consider whether improved hearing can be attributed to systematic error; that is, changes in how hearing was tested over time. It seems unlikely that systematic testing

changes can explain our results. The low frequencies serve as controls; as Tables 2-5 show, we found no changes in thresholds at 500 and 1000 Hz across cohorts when using the criterion of a 5 dB change as meaningful. This helps rule out random or systematic error in testing circumstances. Additionally, we can look at results for different cohorts tested in the same year, where protocols would have been standard across the province. For example, we had data from three ages tested in 1990 (20, 30, and 55-year olds). When we compare each of those ages to the same age tested in a different year, only one cohort (age 55) showed significant differences from cohorts tested at another time, meaning that it is unlikely the different thresholds were due to different test protocols. If it were a change in test protocol, the 20- and 30-year olds would also have had significant differences relative to their age-matched peers tested in different years.

Second, we consider whether seemingly improved hearing can be attributed to changes in regulations that change the definition of a noisy workplace. A potential confound in our study was that with the change in regulations in 1996, the criteria for implementing a hearing conservation program was changed from 90 dBA Lex to 85 dBA Lex. Though between 1980 and 1996, workplaces that exceeded 90 dBA Lex were required to provide hearing tests to individual workers exposed to levels above 85 dBA Lex, the 1996 revision likely resulted in more workplaces overall meeting the criteria for hearing conservation and hearing tests. Thus, it is likely that more individuals included in later cohorts had lower doses of noise exposure (between 85 dBA Lex and 90 dBA Lex). This change may have contributed to better thresholds and lower prevalence of hearing loss than in previous cohorts. To examine this potential confound, we conducted a subset analysis for specific occupations in two different test years, minimizing the likelihood that the change in regulations would be a factor in any cohort differences noted. We identified three occupations for this analysis: Equipment operator/Heavy; Front end loader/ forklift operator; and Heavy-duty mechanic. These occupations were chosen as they were categories used in both test years with at least 20 in each cohort. We focused on 45-year olds in two cohorts: born in 1935 and born in 1970. Forty-five is when we started to see cohort differences. The relevant test years were 1980 and 2015, well before and after the change in regulations. For this analysis, again instead of conducting inferential statistics, we used the clinically-meaningful change of 5 dB difference in thresholds between groups. Appendix B shows the results for 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz for both cohorts for each of the three occupations. For all three frequencies of interest across occupations there is at least 5 dB improvement in thresholds in the later cohorts, with most group differences being closer to 10-15 dB improvement. This lends support to the conclusion that hearing is improving with later cohorts of noise-exposed workers, not an artefact of a changed sample.

Third, we consider changes in recreational noise exposure; that is, noise outside of work environments. We do not have data on recreational noise exposure for this sample but there has been growing concern, often supported by popular media, that younger people are at increased risk for NIHL through poor listening habits and exposure to recreational

noise (24). Recreational settings such as nightclubs, as well as personal stereos, are capable of producing sound well above hazardous levels [e.g., 25,26,27,28], and youth do not tend to prioritize safe listening and instead engage in “risky” listening behaviour while seldom wearing hearing protection [e.g., 24]. Together, this would suggest that NIHL is a growing concern among younger generations. Peer-reviewed literature, such as the review by Carter, et al [29], however, is cautious about drawing a link between recreational exposure and the presence of NIHL. Henderson et al. [24] for example, found that there was no significant increase in rates of NIHL (defined as thresholds 3-6 kHz 15 dB worse than .5-2 kHz, and 8 kHz) in 12-19-year olds from 1994 to 2005. Similarly, Le Prell et al. [30] found “no reliable relationships” between recreational noise exposure and hearing thresholds or other measures of NIHL (DPOAEs, etc) and Kepler et al [31] found no significant differences in 18-30 year olds’ hearing between groups with low, intermediate, and high recreational noise exposure.

The improved thresholds found in our later cohorts are inconsistent with the concern that recreational noise exposure is on the rise among youth and confirm the other studies described showing no increase in NIHL among young people. It is important to remember for our sample that we examined data for people working in noisy environments, which may not be generalizable to the whole population. This group may have more awareness of NIHL due to education and counselling that should come with the annual hearing test, as required by WorkSafeBC. Employers are required to provide education about noise and NIHL annually to workers who are exposed to hazardous noise and one-on-one counselling and training regarding hearing and hearing protection fit and use.

Fourth, it is possible that workplaces have implemented additional noise control and hearing conservation methods that have been effective in reducing NIHL. In 1996, British Columbia’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation expanded on the 1980 Regulations which only required noise control, hearing protection devices, and annual hearing tests. The new regulations include noise measurements, engineered noise control, education and training about noise and NIHL, and an annual program review [18]. Other research has indicated that revisions to Hearing Conservation Program requirements can help reduce the incidence of NIHL [e.g., 32]. Since 1996, there has been a growing emphasis on the “hierarchy of control” in which employers must first explore and implement strategies to reduce the noise exposure levels if feasible. Methods including “buying quiet”, the enclosure of loud machinery or workspaces, reducing noise at the source with regular maintenance, and adding noise abatement materials have all proven effective at reducing noise levels in the workplace. A study of lumber mills in British Columbia [33] and WorkSafeBC noise measurements [34] have confirmed that in many workplaces these changes have reduced noise levels. It is likely that lower noise levels have contributed to lower incidence and severity of NIHL, as has been found in other jurisdictions [14]

In this study, we gathered data on one component of the hearing conservation program: the use of hearing protection, which has been shown to be effective in reducing NIHL

among workers [15, 35]. Twenty year olds' self-reported use of HPDs increased from 65 to 85% from 1980 to 2015, similar to other studies including Fredriksen and colleagues [19], who found that between 2000 and 2010, HPD use increased from 70.1 to 76.1% in Danish workers. Feder and colleagues [7] showed that younger workers aged 16-29 reported wearing HPD more (86%) than older workers aged 50-79 (77%). We only examined self-report of HPD use at 20 years and we do not know how that predicts later HPD use, but the Feder data would support the assumption that differences in the proportion of HPD use at 20 also appear in later age groups.

Although thresholds improved for the later cohorts for 45- and 55-year olds, hearing loss was still present. This leads us to question why there was hearing loss and whether more noise control and hearing protection are needed. Age-related hearing loss (ARHL) is a general term for hearing loss that increases with age without ascribing any one cause to it but is often referred to as distinct from noise-induced HL (NIHL). Both NIHL and ARHL initially present with high-frequency sensorineural hearing loss and they both tend to be bilateral and symmetrical, making them hard to distinguish [36]. However, NIHL tends to result in a notch in the audiogram affecting thresholds from 3-6 kHz, while ARHL tends to start at higher frequencies, manifesting on the audiogram first at 8 kHz [36]. This difference is not a reliable diagnostic marker and the difference between the types of HL is challenging to separate because they often co-occur in the same individual [37]. In our own data, we see a difference in audiogram shape between cohorts for the 45 and 55 year old groups, where later cohorts have audiograms that are more consistent with ARHL than NIHL, with thresholds at 8 kHz that are similar to or poorer than thresholds at lower frequencies. Earlier cohorts demonstrate the characteristic notch, whereby thresholds are poorer from 3-6 kHz than at 8 kHz.

To examine the hypothesis that later cohorts had audiograms consistent with ARHL rather than NIHL, we compared our later cohorts to ISO age-matched [38] for a population without significant occupational noise exposure. If the thresholds in our later cohorts are similar to the ISO thresholds for individuals without noise exposure, then it seems likely that ARHL is the main determinant of thresholds in our later cohorts. The ISO report includes several different data sets for comparison, including data from Sweden, the US, and Norway. For our comparison, we used unscreened data from Sweden as the most similar to our sample. "Unscreened" means that the sample could have otologic dysfunction but not occupational noise exposure, whereas the data from the US included those with occupational noise exposure. The data from Sweden represented both ears, whereas data from Norway were only the most sensitive ear. Our sample examined only left ear thresholds, which could have been the better or worse ear. ISO data are separated for males and females; we calculated a weighted average of male and female thresholds, with a weighting of .9014 for male thresholds and .0986 for female thresholds, reflecting the relative male/ female distribution in our dataset. We used the 50% percentile from the ISO data with a linear interpolation between the data for 50- and 60-year olds to calculate thresholds for 55-year olds to compare to our sample. Appendix C shows the data for the

55-year olds in our sample beside the thresholds calculated from the ISO dataset. For the low frequencies, up to 2000 Hz, we see that both cohorts have thresholds similar to the ISO Swedish unscreened thresholds. For the frequencies monitored for NIHL, 3, 4, and 6 kHz, the 1935 cohort had thresholds poorer than ISO by more than 10 dB, indicating an additional contribution of noise to the hearing loss seen in this sample as a whole. The 1960 cohort was within 5 dB of the ISO thresholds for 3 and 4 kHz, but poorer than ISO by 6 dB at 6 kHz. It seems that the role of noise in determining these thresholds is likely reduced for the 1960 cohort, but may still be present, given the small decline in thresholds at 6 kHz above what is expected due to ARHL alone.

5 Limitations and future directions

The data we obtained for analysis were de-identified with only limited demographic and potential moderating variables available. No gender data were available to link to individual audiograms, but we know that for each cohort, the percentage of males ranged from 89-95%. Further gender-based modeling of the data would be helpful to further understand the trends.

We made some assumptions about the cumulative noise exposure of individuals in the database given the limited data available. We assume that if the workers received an annual hearing test, they were exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 dBA Lex during the year of the test and between test years. However, it is possible that some employers err on the side of caution and test all workers regardless of job duties and noise exposure, or it is possible that some workers were only temporarily in noisy workplaces. Although some of these details are not available from the historical database, further analyses could purposefully sample smaller, more homogeneous groups by specific occupation, analyzing annual data for both thresholds and HPD use over time.

We examined a subset of the noise-exposed population who have had hearing tests, demonstrating they received at least one element of a hearing conservation program. While this demonstrates that hearing conservation programs seem to work for this population, the findings are not generalizable to workers who are exposed to noise but do not have annual hearing tests, which might also mean that other elements of a hearing conservation program are not implemented at their worksite.

6 Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the prevalence of hearing loss decreased, and hearing thresholds generally improved in an occupationally noise exposed population between 1980 and 2015 in British Columbia. The changes correlate with revisions to Workers' Compensation Board regulations in which the criterion level for implementation of noise control and hearing conservation programs was lowered from 90 dBA Lex to 85 dBA Lex, and additional requirements were added. Increased education and awareness, improvement in engineered noise controls, and increased use of hearing protection devices might contribute to the better hearing seen in later cohorts.

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Appendix A: Results of the chi-square analysis comparing prevalence of hearing loss across cohorts at each age. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons are given when appropriate to do so.

Age (years)	Birth Cohort	N persons	% with hearing loss present	Chi-squared contingency test	Posthoc pairwise comparisons
20	1960	2165	1.94%	X = 7.59, df = 3, <i>p</i> = .055	
	1970	2326	2.06%		
	1985	2496	1.32%		
	1995	2322	1.25%		
30	1960	5167	3.37%	X = 8.51, df = 1, <i>p</i> = .004	
	1985	3949	2.33%		
45	1935	1387	18.24%	X = 131.08, df = 2, <i>p</i> < .001	1935 vs 1960: X = 100.53, df = 1, <i>p</i> < .001
	1960	4560	8.66%		1935 vs 1970: X = 108.441, df = 1, <i>p</i> < .001
	1970	3764	8.08%		1960 vs 1970: X = 0.902, df = 1, <i>p</i> = .342
55	1935	2137	35.22%	X = 200.9, df = 1, <i>p</i> < .001	
	1960	4160	18.99%		

Appendix B: Observed threshold means (dB HL) by cohort and frequency for 45-year olds by occupation. Upper and lower 95% confidence intervals of the means are shown in square brackets

Occupation	Cohort	N	3000 Hz	4000 Hz	6000 Hz
Heavy equipment operator	1980 test (1935 cohort)	43	31.3 [24.2, 38.4]	37.0 [30.8, 43.1]	38.8 [32.4, 45.3]
	2015 test (1970 cohort)	99	16.5 [13.4, 19.5]	24.6 [21.2, 28.0]	23.1 [20.0, 26.3]
Front end loader/ forklift operator	1980 test (1935 cohort)	66	25.1 [21.6, 30.2]	34.5 [30.1, 38.9]	34.5 [29.1, 39.9]
	2015 test (1970 cohort)	65	17.5 [13.8, 21.2]	21.9 [18.6, 25.2]	22.2 [18.4, 26.03]
Heavy duty mechanic	1980 test (1935 cohort)	32	30.3 [22.4, 38.2]	37.7 [29.3, 46.1]	36.7 [28.7, 44.8]
	2015 test (1970 cohort)	83	14.7 [11.9, 17.5]	23.1 [19.7, 26.6]	23.8 [20.3, 27.3]

Appendix C: Thresholds and 95% confidence intervals for the 55-year olds in our sample. The ISO thresholds are calculated from the ISO 1999:2013(E) data set (see text for further details). The difference between ISO and our sample is calculated as the difference between the ISO threshold and either the upper or lower limit of the 95% CI from our sample. “Not different” indicates that ISO mean threshold fell within the 95% CI of our sample.

Freq (Hz)	Cohort	N	Mean	sd	95% CI [LL,UL]	ISO	Diff between ISO and our sample (dB)	Comparison relative to ISO
500	1935	2124	12.3	11.3	[11.8, 12.8]	11	-0.8	Poorer than ISO by less than 5 dB
	1960	4158	10.7	9.8	[10.4, 11.0]		0	Not different from ISO
1000	1935	2124	12.8	12.6	[12.3, 13.3]	12.9	0	Not different from ISO
	1960	4158	11.1	11	[10.8, 11.4]		1.5	Better than ISO by less than 5 dB
2000	1935	2124	19.3	18	[18.5, 20.0]	16.3	-2.2	Poorer than ISO by less than 5 dB
	1960	4158	13.2	12.8	[12.8, 13.6]		2.7	Better than ISO by less than 5 dB
3000	1935	2124	33.7	21.5	[32.3, 34.6]	21.3	-11	Poorer than ISO by more than 10 dB
	1960	4158	22.8	18	[22.3, 23.3]		-1	Poorer than ISO by less than 5 dB
4000	1935	2124	42.1	21.2	[41.2, 43.0]	27.1	-14.1	Poorer than ISO by more than 10 dB
	1960	4158	30.9	19.1	[30.3, 31.5]		-3.4	Poorer than ISO by less than 5 dB
6000	1935	2124	43.9	21.8	[43.0, 44.8]	26.4	-16.6	Poorer than ISO by more than 10 dB
	1960	4158	32.9	19.4	[32.3, 33.5]		-5.9	Poorer than ISO by more than 5 dB
8000	1935	2124	41.4	23	[40.4, 42.4]	33.3	-7.1	Poorer than ISO by more than 5 dB
	1960	4158	35.3	21.5	[34.6, 36.0]		-1.3	Poorer than ISO by less than 5 dB



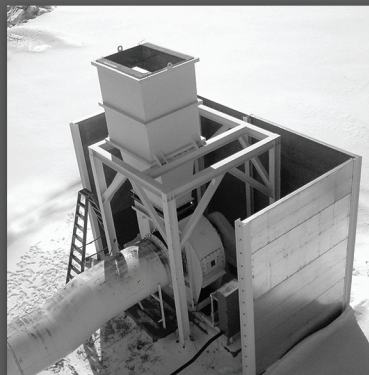
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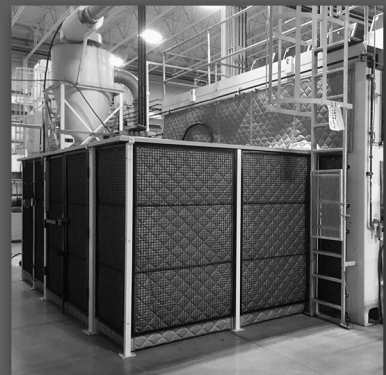
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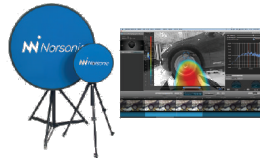
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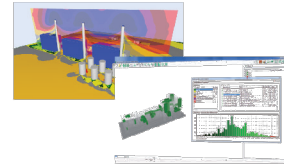
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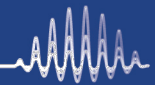
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A tribute to Tony F.W. Embleton

Tony F.W. Embleton, FRSC, passed away on 13 November 2020. He was a leader in acoustics in Canada and internationally. Tony was a founding member of the Canadian Acoustical Association and the first Editor-in-Chief of its journal.

Tony was born in Hornchurch, Essex, England, 1 October 1929. He earned a PhD in physics in 1952 from Imperial College London, under R.W.B. Stephens. A one-year post-doctoral fellowship at the National Research Council in Ottawa turned into a four-decade career there.

Tony has been a guiding light for acoustics in Canada. In the early 1960's, he was a key participant in discussions to form a national acoustics organization in Canada. He was elected as the first Secretary of the Canadian Acoustical Association (then known as the Canadian Committee on Acoustics). A few years later when it was decided that a regular newsletter was essential, Tony became the first Editor-in-Chief of Acoustics and Noise Control in Canada / L'acoustique et la lutte antibruit au Canada which later became Canadian Acoustics / Acoustique canadienne. A major event for the CAA was hosting the 1986 International Congress on Acoustics – Tony Embleton was the Technical Program Chair for this meeting. He also served on the CAA Board of Directors.

His research addressed many significant and practical concerns in Canada. His earlier work focussed on the noise generated by suction rolls in the paper industry. The intense siren-like noise generated by the large suction rolls had become a matter of major national concern. This was followed by work on noise reduction in centrifugal blowers and axial-flow compressors, quietening jet engines, precision reciprocity calibration of microphones, and the outdoor propagation of community noise. His work showed how theoretical and experimental research could go hand-in-hand to solve practical problems. Early in his career (1964), his scientific skills were recognized with the ASA's R. Bruce Lindsay award.

Tony also participated in many other organizations, Canadian and international. He chaired the Acoustics and Noise Control Committee of the Canadian Standards Association. Tony served in many capacities for the Institute of Noise Control Engineers (INCE) and for the International-INCE. With the Acoustical Society of America (ASA),



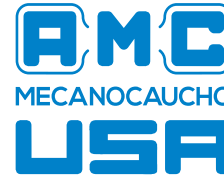
he has chaired their Technical Committee on Noise, served on numerous committees, led the society as its President, and been their Standards Director. In 1986 he was awarded their Silver Medal in Noise and, in 2002, he received their Gold Medal. He was Technical Chair for ASA meetings in 1968 (Ottawa), 1978 (Honolulu), 1988 (Honolulu), and 1996 (Honolulu) and General Chair for the 1981 ASA meeting.

His research was significant and of the highest quality; his service to societies was diligent, efficient, and cooperative. He was always willing to help, whether you were a society president or a student new to acoustics. At meetings, he was often surrounded by people, young and old, wanting to access his vast store of knowledge. Tony was predeceased by his wife Eileen in 2016 and is survived by his daughter Sheila and granddaughter Anne.

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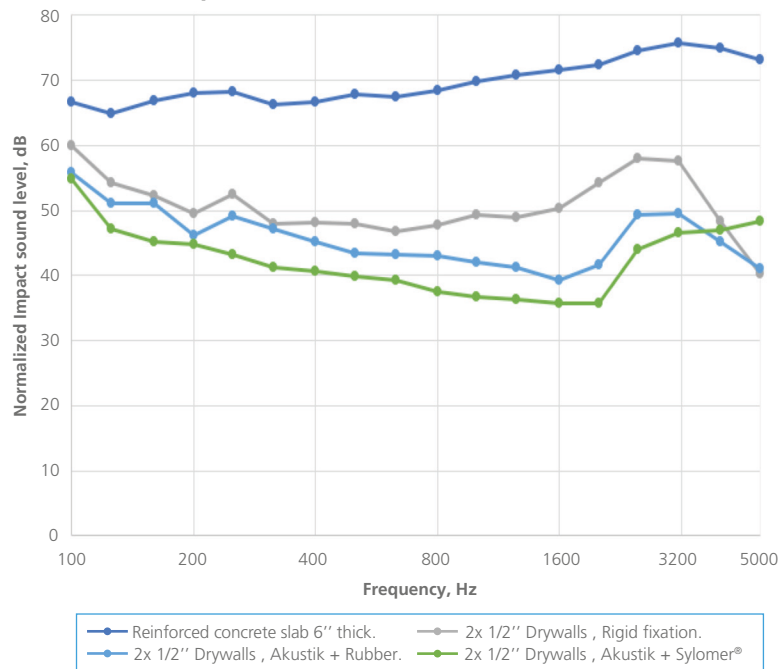


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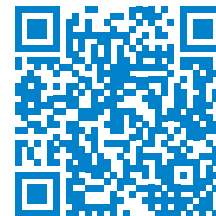
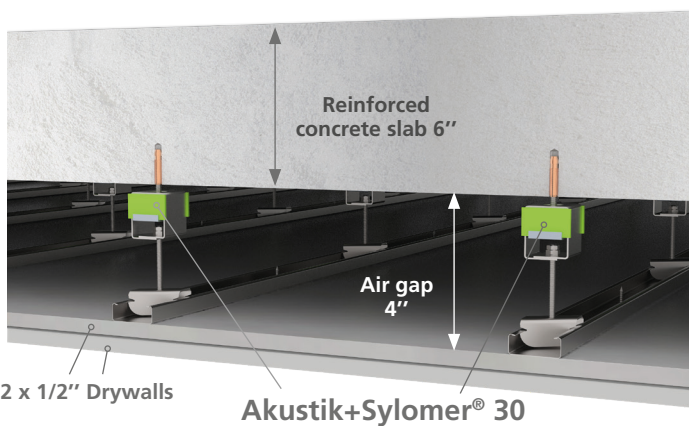


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Dear Sir or Madam,

The Paul S. Veneklasen Research Foundation is asking that you make members of the Canadian Acoustical Society aware that the first “open access” **acoustics textbook** is now available for **free download worldwide**. The e-book version of the second edition of Steven Garrett's *Understanding Acoustics: An experimentalist's view of sound and vibration* can be downloaded from the **Springer** web site at the link provided below:

<https://www.springer.com/in/book/9783030447861>

The 100-page *Solution Manual* for all of the end-of-chapter problems in the second edition is also available at that site to qualified instructors, as are links to purchase the print versions or request an instructor examination copy for possible course use.

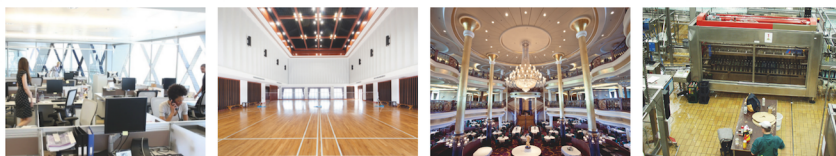
The first edition of Dr. Garrett's textbook received enthusiastic reviews (*e.g.*, P. Joseph, *Physics Today* **70**(10), 62 (2017); M. Kleiner, *J. Audio Eng. Soc.* **65**(11), 972 (2017)) and the second edition corrects some first edition errors, includes many improved figures, as well as new material in such areas as the radiation from an un baffled piston, the introduction of phasor notation to clearly distinguish complex variables, additional problems, and a much more detailed and comprehensive index.

We hope that the members of your acoustical society will find this “open access” second edition useful for both instruction and for reference. If a member of your acoustical society would like to review the second edition in your journal or newsletter, requests for a review copy can be addressed to Springer at Barbara.Amorese@Springer.com.

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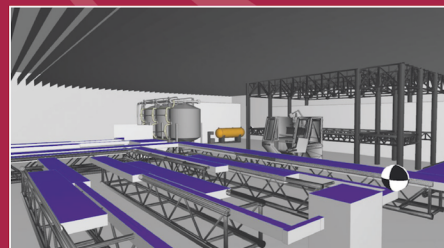
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Following its postponement from 2020, Acoustics Week in Canada 2021 will be held on October 6-8, in Sherbrooke, Québec.



View of Mont-Orford from downtown Sherbrooke

Given the current context related to the COVID-19 pandemic, you are invited to be part of this three-day online conference featuring the latest developments in Canadian acoustics and vibration. Sherbrooke is well known in acoustics for the Groupe d'Acoustique de l'Université de Sherbrooke (GAUS) founded in 1984.

The theme of this unusual conference will be 'STEMulating Canadian Acoustics'. Each day will have a more specific theme: "Sound and objects" (October 06), "Sound and living beings" (October 07) and "Sound and computers" (08 October 08).

Sessions will be organized from noon to 5:30 p.m., so as to consider the different time zones of Canada

Plenary, technical sessions.

Each half-day will begin with a keynote of broader interest and relevance to the acoustics community. This keynote will be followed by alternating 'lightning' presentations and a period of exchange / discussion in dedicated virtual spaces. Technical sessions are typically planned to cover all areas of acoustics, and will then be gathered under the general themes 'Sound and objects', 'Sound and living beings' and 'Sound and computers'. Accepted research areas include:

AEROACOUSTICS / ARCHITECTURAL AND BUILDING ACOUSTICS / BIO-ACOUSTICS AND BIOMEDICAL ACOUSTICS / MUSICAL ACOUSTICS / NOISE AND NOISE CONTROL / PHYSICAL ACOUSTICS / PSYCHO- AND PHYSIO-ACOUSTICS / SHOCK AND VIBRATION / SIGNAL PROCESSING / SPEECH SCIENCES AND HEARING SCIENCES / STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES IN ACOUSTICS / ULTRASONICS / UNDERWATER ACOUSTICS

Lightning presentations, to foster exchanges.

To improve interactivity, we propose to generalize a lightning presentation format. Objective: Illustrate your key point in 3 minutes or less, generate interest and create an anchor point for people so that they will join later online. This format will be generalized to all participants.

Extended abstracts and articles on a voluntary basis.

For this year, only short abstracts and lightning videos will be mandatory, so as to organize and build the program. Extended abstracts and articles submission will be possible, but on a voluntary basis. This is proposed in order to motivate people to participate and to lighten the associated workload.

'All virtual' rooms, always opened during the three afternoons.

To discuss online after or during lightning presentations, for students' poster presentations, a room entirely dedicated to exhibitors and a room to display job offers and CV.

A unifying event.

To structure the event around a common goal, we aim at creating the largest noise map ever implemented in Canada by multiplying local initiatives (the largest, not in terms of measurement points but in terms of spatial extension). This will be linked to the International Year of Sound 2020-2021, a global initiative to highlight the importance of sound and related sciences and technologies for all in society (<https://sound2020.org/>). For each involved chapter, the committee will be interested in receiving



Anechoic room and wind-tunnel opening at GAUS

nominations to help collect data locally (the application used will be Noise Capture, <https://noise-planet.org/noisecapture.html>). Each local section will also be able to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss noise problems in their areas of specialization (underwater noise, noise for wildlife, consequences of noise for society).

Exhibition and sponsorship.

The conference offers product and service providers the opportunity to engage the acoustical community through exhibition and sponsorship. The conference will offer sponsorship opportunities for various conference events. Sponsors can place their logo on the conference website within 10 days of sponsorship. Additional sponsorship features and benefits can be obtained from the Exhibit and Sponsorship Coordinator or on the conference website.

Students.

Students are strongly encouraged to participate. Students presenting papers will be eligible for one of three Best Presentation Student prizes to be awarded.

Registration details.

For registration details, please refer to the conference web site <https://awc.caa-aca.ca/index.php/AWC/AWC21>

Contacts.

Conference Chair:
Olivier Robin
(Olivier.Robin@USherbrooke.ca)

Technical co-Chairs:
Patrice Masson and
Sebastian Ghinet
(Patrice.Masson@USherbrooke.ca)
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Enjoy (virtually) the Mont Bellevue in the center of Sherbrooke during Fall

Suite à son report en 2020, la Semaine canadienne d'acoustique 2021 se tiendra du 06 au 08 octobre 2021 à Sherbrooke, Québec.



Vue du mont Orford depuis le centre-ville de Sherbrooke

Étant donné le contexte actuel lié à la pandémie de COVID-19, nous vous invitons à prendre part en ligne à cette conférence de trois jours sur les derniers développements en matière d'acoustique et de vibrations au Canada. Sherbrooke est reconnue en acoustique pour le Groupe d'Acoustique de l'Université de Sherbrooke (GAUS) fondé en 1984.

Le thème de cette conférence inhabituelle sera 'Stimuler l'acoustique canadienne'. Chaque journée aura un thème spécifique : 'Son et objets' (06 octobre), 'Son et êtres vivants' (07 octobre) et 'Son et ordinateurs' (08 octobre).

Des demi-journées seront organisées, de midi à 17h30, afin de tenir compte des différents fuseaux horaires du Canada.

Des séances plénières, techniques.

Chaque demi-journée débutera par une plénière d'un intérêt et d'une pertinence plus larges pour la communauté de l'acoustique. Cette plénière sera suivie par une alternance entre présentations 'éclair' et période d'échange/discussion dans des espaces virtuels dédiés. Des sessions techniques sont typiquement prévues pour couvrir tous les domaines de l'acoustique, et seront ensuite regroupées sous les grandes bannières 'Son et objets', 'Son et êtres vivants' et 'Son et ordinateurs'. Les thèmes acceptés incluent :

AÉROACOUSTIQUE / ACOUSTIQUE DU BÂTIMENT ET ARCHITECTURALE / BIOACOUSTIQUE / ACOUSTIQUE BIOMÉDICALE / ACOUSTIQUE MUSICALE / BRUIT ET CONTRÔLE DU BRUIT / ACOUSTIQUE PHYSIQUE / PSYCHOACOUSTIQUE / CHOCS ET VIBRATION / LINGUISTIQUE / AUDIOLOGIE / ULTRASONS / ACOUSTIQUE SOUS-MARINE / NORMES EN ACOUSTIQUE

Des présentations 'éclair' pour stimuler les échanges.

Afin de rendre les échanges plus interactifs, nous proposons de généraliser un format de présentation 'éclair'. Objectif : donner votre point de vue en 3 minutes maximum, susciter l'intérêt et créer un point d'ancrage pour que les gens se joignent plus tard pour discuter directement avec vous en ligne. Ce format sera généralisé à toutes les personnes participantes.

Résumés et articles sur une base volontaire.

Pour cette année, les résumés étendus et articles pour le journal d'Acoustique Canadienne seront à fournir sur une base purement volontaire. Les résumés et les vidéos 'éclair' seront obligatoires et devront être soumis en avance pour assurer le processus de sélection, la qualité du programme et la construction de ce dernier.

Uniquement des salles virtuelles, ouvertes en tout temps durant les trois après-midis.

Pour discuter avant, pendant et après les présentations 'éclair', pour les présentations posters pour étudiant.e.s qui le désirent, une salle entièrement dédiée aux exposants et une salle pour afficher offres d'emploi et CV.

Un évènement structurant et visible.

Afin de structurer l'évènement autour d'un objectif commun, nous visons à créer la plus grande carte de bruit jamais mise en œuvre au Canada en multipliant les initiatives locales (pas en nombre de points de mesure mais en termes d'étendue spatiale). Cela se reliera à l'année internationale du son 2020-2021, une initiative globale destinée à illustrer l'importance du son et de ses sciences et technologies dans la société (<https://sound2020.org/>). Pour chaque section locale, le comité sera intéressé de recevoir des candidatures pour aider à collecter localement des données (l'application utilisée sera Noise Capture, <https://noise-planet.org/noisecapture.html>).



Salle anéchoïque et soufflerie au GAUS

Chaque section locale pourra également profiter de cette occasion pour évoquer les problèmes de bruit dans ses domaines de spécialisation (bruit sous-marin, bruit pour la faune, conséquences du bruit pour la société)

Exposition et Parrainage.

La conférence offre aux fournisseurs de produits et de services la possibilité de faire participer la communauté acoustique par l'exposition et le parrainage. La conférence offrira des possibilités de parrainage de divers évènements de la conférence. Les commanditaires peuvent placer leur logo sur le site Web de la conférence dans les 10 jours suivant leur parrainage. Les caractéristiques et avantages supplémentaires du parrainage peuvent être obtenus auprès du coordonnateur des expositions et des commandes ou sur le site Web de la conférence.

Les étudiant.e.s.

Les étudiant.e.s sont fortement encouragé.e.s à participer. Les étudiants qui présenteront seront admissibles à l'un des trois prix pour les meilleures présentations.

Informations sur l'inscription.

Pour plus d'information sur l'inscription, veuillez consulter le site Web de la conférence :
<http://awc.caa-aca.ca/AWC/AWC21>.

Contacts.

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Présidents techniques :
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Sebastian Ghinet
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CANADIAN ACOUSTICS ANNOUNCEMENTS - ANNONCES TÉLÉGRAPHIQUES DE L'ACOUSTIQUE CANADIENNE

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Acoustics Week in Canada 2021

Because of the COVID-19 situation, the Acoustics Week in Canada (AWC) originally planned for October 2020 in Sherbrooke (QC) will be postpone to October 2021. Nevertheless, and as a "warm up", Sherbrooke's organising committee is currently looking into setting up a little 1-day online celebration for October 2020. You can find more information on the AWC20 and AWC21 websites. Please note that St-John's (NL) will host the AWC2022 conference.

May 3rd 2019

COVID-19 Situation

Because of the COVID-19 situation, the Acoustics Week in Canada (AWC) originally planned for October 2020 in Sherbrooke (QC) will be postpone to October 2021. Nevertheless, and as a "warm up", Sherbrooke's organising committee is currently looking into setting up a little 1-day online celebration for October 2020. You can find more information on the AWC20 and AWC21 websites. Please note that St-John's (NL) will host the AWC2022 conference.

May 13th 2020

Canada Sound Week

The second edition of Canada Sound Week will be held online from March 22 to 27, 2021.

All information is available online at <https://lasemainedusoncanada.wordpress.com>

March 11th 2021

À la recherche d'un emploi en acoustique ?

De nombreuses offre d'emploi sont affichées sur le site de l'Association canadienne d'acoustique !

Vous pouvez les consulter en ligne à l'adresse <http://www.caa-aca.ca/jobs/>

August 5th 2015

Semaine canadienne de l'acoustique 2021

En raison de la situation COVID-19, la Semaine canadienne de l'acoustique (AWC) initialement prévue en octobre 2020 à Sherbrooke (QC) sera reportée à octobre 2021. Néanmoins, et comme "échauffement", le comité organisateur de Sherbrooke étudie actuellement la possibilité de mettre en place une petite célébration d'une journée en ligne pour octobre 2020. Vous pouvez trouver plus d'informations sur le site des conférences AWC20 et AWC21. Veuillez noter que St-John's (NL) sera l'hôte de la conférence AWC2022.

May 3rd 2019

Situation COVID-19

En raison de la situation COVID-19, la Semaine canadienne de l'acoustique (AWC) initialement prévue en octobre 2020 à Sherbrooke (QC) sera reportée à octobre 2021. Néanmoins, et comme "échauffement", le comité organisateur de Sherbrooke étudie actuellement la possibilité de mettre en place une petite célébration d'une journée en ligne

pour octobre 2020. Vous pouvez trouver plus d'informations sur le site des conférences AWC20 et AWC21. Veuillez noter que St-John's (NL) sera l'hôte de la conférence AWC2022.


May 13th 2020

La Semaine du son Canada

La deuxième édition de la Semaine du son Canada se tiendra en ligne du 22 au 27 mars 2021.

Toutes les informations sont disponibles en ligne via <https://lasemainedusoncanada.wordpress.com>

March 11th 2021



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Ce répertoire des membres est généré à partir des informations de la base de données des membres de l'Association canadienne d'acoustique. Merci de mettre à jour ou corriger toute information directement sur <http://jcaa.caa-aca.ca>.

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