

**The Sound Book. The Science of the Sonic Wonders of the World**

Trevor Cox

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A reverberation time of 75 (seventy-five) seconds? A cicada that can generate a sound pressure level equal to that of a pneumatic drill? You better believe it. Following in the footsteps of Rodolphe Radau and its 19th century *Wonders of Acoustics. Or the Phenomena of Sound*, Trevor Cox takes on the reader in an incredible voyage around the world, looking for (and discovering) the most reverberant place on earth, playing an organ constructed out of underground caves and taking us to a concert where the instruments are made of ice, to name just a few stops along the journey. And yes, we get to learn some fascinating things about the animal kingdom and its sounds, including that the African Cicada can generate an SPL of 107 dB at 50 centimeters.

But this book goes far beyond putting some interesting facts about sound together. The author is able to actually bring the science of sound into a format that is readily accessible to readers without formal scientific training and still remain satisfying to those who like

to approach the topics from a more rigorous fashion. Rather than simply stating results and findings, Trevor Cox actually engages the reader into the discovery process and even those with extensive training in acoustics will actually have no choice but to accept the reality that there are a lot of things about sound that one may not have known about; I know this for a fact because that's what happened to me as I started to read this wonderful book.

The clarity of the writing is outstanding; Trevor Cox is always focused on guiding the reader into that moment where “whoa” is the only appropriate response to the discovery. He uses fun, puns, self-deprecation, skepticism and superb endnotes to create chapters that read like mystery page-turners and leave the reader eager for the next stop on the discovery voyage. This book should be required reading for anyone who is looking for amazement in everyday life; it will turn readers into informed listeners, and that by itself is a rather impressive achievement. Highly recommended.

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