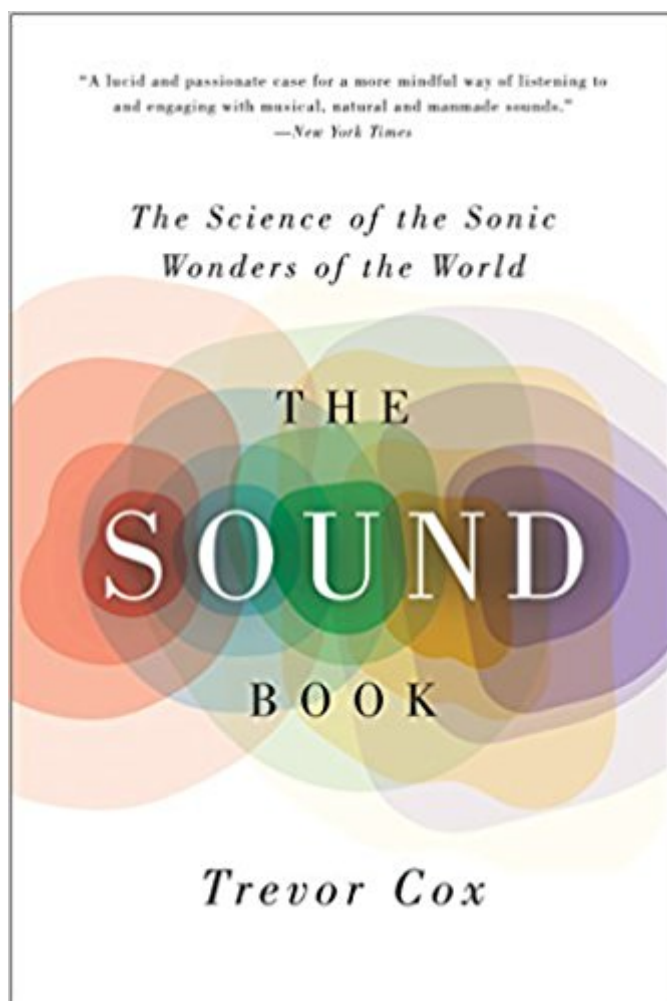


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The Sound Book: The Science Of The Sonic Wonders Of The World



Synopsis

“A lucid and passionate case for a more mindful way of listening. . . . Anyone who has ever clapped, hollered or yodeled at an echo will delight in [Cox’s] zestful curiosity.” —New York Times

Trevor Cox is on a hunt for the sonic wonders of the world. A renowned expert who engineers classrooms and concert halls, Cox has made a career of eradicating bizarre and unwanted sounds. But after an epiphany in the London sewers, Cox now revels in exotic noises — creaking glaciers, whispering galleries, stalactite organs, musical roads, humming dunes, seals that sound like alien angels, and a Mayan pyramid that chirps like a bird. With forays into archaeology, neuroscience, biology, and design, Cox explains how sound is made and altered by the environment, how our body reacts to peculiar noises, and how these mysterious wonders illuminate sound’s surprising dynamics in everyday settings — from your bedroom to the opera house. The Sound Book encourages us to become better listeners in a world dominated by the visual and to open our ears to the glorious cacophony all around us.

Book Information

File Size: 4660 KB

Print Length: 337 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (February 10, 2014)

Publication Date: February 3, 2014

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00DX5X9DE

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #386,286 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #17

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Science > Biological Sciences > Zoology >

Primatology #83 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology > Primatology

#97 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Science > Physics > Acoustics & Sound

Customer Reviews

“The Sound Book” is a science essay by an acoustic engineer, Trevor Cox, who travels around the world seeking the sonic wonders. He seems to be more effusive on the sound effect of artifacts than those in nature. May be he believes in vivid sound of our life itself is our social, cultural gains. He examines the mysterious sound of ancient remains. He supposes our ancient ancestors have been exploiting cave acoustics when they have told stories around their drawings. The evidence that rock art is found in places where the sound is especially noteworthy verifies his supposition. The images of horses, bulls, bison and deer are found in regions with high levels of sound reflection, whereas feline art is found in regions of the caves with poor acoustic. It would be probably safe to assume that speech, music, and other sounds were played within stone circles. The Greeks are credited with an understanding of acoustics which still baffles modern science. He warns one thing that can endanger sonic wonders is well-meaning conservation that considers only the visual to be important. We assume a posture of defense to the unfamiliar sound. Hearing ability has taken an important role in human beings’ successful surviving. He illustrates interesting exemplifications of evolution. Some vines in the rain forest increase their chances of being pollinated by attracting bats with its concave leaf, whereas a certain moth uses their long tails as ultrasonic decoys to evade the attack from bats. Forests transmit bass more easily could explain why rainforest birds tend to produce low-frequency songs with drawn-out simple notes. Cox says the bird’s song pitch has dropped and the birds now sing more slowly in places where foliage has become heavier over decades. He sounds the alarm, aren’t we constantly sending out critical noise to the living creatures throughout our civilization process? We create noise when we navigate by ship. We grope around in the sea using a sonar system. Noise may displace fish populations from breeding and spawning grounds, and obscure the communication between animals needed for finding mates, navigating, and maintaining social groups. If we are exposed to high levels of noise, our bodies will produce more stress hormones in the long term that might elevate blood pressure and increase the risk of heart disease. We long for tranquility, dreaming of the soundless world. But there isn’t any place without sound in this world. This book is like a sound museum. Every page is filled with peculiar sound. Nature sound heels our mind. The health benefits of natural sounds. On the other hand, it is true that hearing human activity also reduces our stress. Being a social animal has been a vital part of our evolutionary success. As an audio freak, I’m enjoying reverberated music sources daily, while struggling to eliminate unnecessary pink and white noise. Music soothes us. Music making has played an important role in

social bonding, collaborative working. Cox opines the core of Western music is the switching between tension-filled dissonance and harmonious consonance. He explains humans initially find consonance can be changed by music that we hear during our lives. His theory, the feeling of tension resolved is something we tend to enjoy, sounds fresh to me. After reading this book, I want to travel around my home country searching our iconic sounds.

Trevor Cox is an acoustics professor in the UK who loves his work and has spent many years traveling and listening to any number of things that make sounds, some of them human-made, others natural. I first heard of Prof. Cox and his new book on an NPR interview in early 2014. It sounded intriguing and is! This is not a scientific or engineering text; in fact, it's not very technical at all. What it is is a book of adventures by Prof. Cox as he travels and listens to things that are interesting; this includes auditoriums, underground storage facilities (which have some very interesting reverberations), singing sands, ancient Greek amphitheaters (yes they have very good acoustics, but no the ancients didn't know more than modern engineers). He covers bird songs in some detail. There are a lot of birdwatchers out there, unfortunately there seem to be many less who listen to them. He is an acoustics professor, but he covers so very many things that it's difficult to recall them all. It does whet the appetite for more and that's all to the good. Any number of the things discussed can be pursued by the avid reader -- perhaps a little more research online or even trying to make your own recordings. With the number of small portable computers on the market, a microphone or two, and a video camera you can capture sight and sound alike. A modest priced system should get the interested person started. I could go on, but I won't; the list of things covered is large and it'll do you more good to read the book than to hear me go on and on about it. If you want a technical book on any of the many areas of sound, from recording techniques to acoustics, to FFTs and DSPs, do look elsewhere; has many. But for a nice popular book with a sense of adventure, well written by a man who's not only an expert but obviously loves his calling, this is a very nice book indeed.

After hearing an interview with the author on NPR, I was intrigued enough to order this book. It was very much well worth it. If you're an audio engineer or lay-person interested in the way sound works in our world, you'll enjoy this book. From natural phenomena to man-made artifacts, both old and new, the way sound works in our world is intriguingly explored in a very easy to read manner. This is not a technical book, nor a difficult read - and neither is it unnecessarily dumbed-down either. Get it. You'll enjoy it!

I've been into sound therapy since 1987 and this book is very interesting. It's not about therapy, but about many different places in the world with very unusual sound phenomenon.

it's a bit hard to read for those not sophisticated in physics, but still very interesting to dig into. a bit less of science, a bit more of entertainment would give it 5 stars.

This explanation of the aural world is good but it could include more on the music creations of humans.

There was so much information, much of which I had never focused on before and/or thought about. Today, I listened to my favorite birds singing with an even more sensitive interest.

Fantastic exploration of sound and space in the world!

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