



The Sound Book: The Science of the Sonic Wonders of the World

By Trevor Cox



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A tour of the world's most amazing acoustic phenomena that reveals how sound works in everyday life.

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. 35 illustrations

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Editorial Review

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As a seasoned architectural acoustics specialist, Cox has made a living out of retrofitting theaters and classrooms to minimize unwanted echoes and other sonic distortions. While visiting an unusually reverberant London sewer, Cox had a sudden epiphany that spawned a new hobby somewhat at odds with his chosen profession: seeking out and cataloging unusual noises. One result of his research is this enchanting guidebook to the “sonic wonders of the world,” in which he analyzes such aural anomalies as humming sand dunes and chirping Mayan pyramids. Without getting lost in arcane scientific minutiae, Cox provides several easily digested lessons in acoustics on his way to describing the many sonic marvels he visited and studied around the world, from the famous whispering gallery of London’s St. Paul’s Cathedral to the melancholy underwater songs produced by bearded seals near the Svalbard archipelago in Norway. Interspersed with witty anecdotes and surprising observations on the nature of hearing, Cox’s work will give readers a new appreciation for both the odd and the ordinary noises that form the soundtrack of our daily lives. --Carl Hays

Review

“A riveting ear-opener, Trevor Cox describes in lyrical detail a range of sonic events and new ways of listening that can only brighten our experience of the acoustic world around us. A must-read for sound-lovers of all stripes.” (Bernie Krause, author of *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music in the World’s Wild Places*)

“Cox reminds us not only of the sonic marvels we often miss, but also how those sounds affect us.”
(Publishers Weekly)

“This small encyclopedia of strange sounds reveals how much art there is in the act of listening. Reading it made my ears more mindful.” (Adam Gopnik)

“A technological travelogue conducted by an expert tour guide, bursting with aural arcana that adds just the right amount of tech-savvy detail, *The Sound Book* brings into relief a world often obscured in our image-heavy existence. Even as we follow Cox to the ends of the Earth, what makes his book a real rush is that it’s ultimately an ear-buzzing journey to the center of our minds.” (Greg Milner, *Perfecting Sound Forever*)

“An intriguing *tour d’horizon* of the world of sound.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“Turns up the volume on...sonic oddities.” (NPR)

“[A] mission to make sound tourism the next big thing.” (Gemma Tarlach - Discover)

“From its first page to its last, *The Sound Book* invites readers to close their eyes and open their ears to the sounds, both normal and peculiar, that surround us all.” (Science News)

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About the Author

A professor of acoustic engineering, Trevor Cox has appeared on the Discovery and National Geographic

channels, produced seventeen BBC radio documentaries, and holds the Guinness Record for discovering the world's "Longest Echo." He lives in Manchester, England.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marlon Taylor:

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