

Halls for Music Performance:
Another Two Decades of Experience--1982--2002
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Foreword

"The past two decades have seen a remarkable growth in number and technical quality of facilities devoted to the performing arts."

These words began the introduction for the 1982 book, *Halls for Music Performance: Two Decades of Experience, 1962-1982*, and they are even more appropriate today, as illustrated by the projects in this new edition

The 1982 book was the first of a "poster book" series published by the Acoustical Society of America (ASA). The other titles include *Acoustics of Worship Spaces*, published in 1985, *Theatres for Drama Performance: Recent Experience in Acoustical Design*, in 1986, and *Acoustical Design of Music Education Facilities*, in 1990. Each of these books was based on posters presented at special poster sessions sponsored by the Technical Committee on Architectural Acoustics (TCAA) at national meetings of the ASA. The presenters, for the most part, had provided consulting services on the buildings and were intimately familiar with the design, construction, and cost issues as well as the technical acoustical considerations involved in shepherding a complex performing arts facility from conception to a real building for musical performances.

Why poster sessions and, more to the point, how did the ASA's Technical Committee on Architectural Acoustics get into the business of producing poster books? During the 1960's and 70's, the society experienced widespread growth in practically all of its sub-disciplines, including architectural acoustics. This meant increasing numbers of parallel sessions during the five days of its semi-annual technical meetings. In the past, one could attend the sessions in his or her primary interest area and still have plenty of time to attend sessions in other disciplines. As the ASA and its meetings grew, several of the larger technical committees filled every available morning and afternoon session during the five-day meeting period with papers, leaving no opportunity to attend sessions in other disciplines

Other professional societies particularly the very large ones, were experiencing the same dilemma. Some societies, notably the American Chemical Society, experimented with requiring that presenters prepare graphic and other explanatory material on their technical paper to be posted on a section of a large bulletin board. Presenters would stand by their posters to respond to questions and discuss their research with small groups of interested colleagues. Theoretically, the size of the meeting room was the only limit to the number of papers that could be accommodated and no potentially worthy papers need be turned down no matter how large the

society and its meetings grew. The post and pre cis-poster formats worked very well for many ASA technical committees but, for architectural acoustics and noise control, poster sessions had distinct advantages over the usual 15-20 minute technical paper presentation format.

Technical reports on architectural acoustics research or consulting projects usually involve large and often complex buildings or building sub-systems that are best described through architectural drawings. When the poster session was being considered by the ASA, several of us on the Technical Committee on Architectural Acoustics were able to foresee the promise of poster sessions for many of the types of work usually reported on in our proposed special sessions. Indeed, TCAA scheduled its first "Poster Session on General Building Sound Isolation and Noise Control" at the 93rd Meeting of the ASA at Pennsylvania State University, June 1977.

The success of the Penn State poster session led to the planning for the first special poster session on Halls for Music Performance to be scheduled at the 103rd meeting of the ASA in Chicago in April 1982. The Chicago session had one notable difference-the posters had a prescribed format so they could be easily reproduced and bundled with other posters in the session as a publication. This resulting publication would be an important reference for the benefit of colleagues around the world who were not able to attend the meeting and for future practitioners in the field of architectural acoustics.

The potential of being able to publish such a large collection of case studies for particular building types, with modest effort on the part of the multiple "authors" involved, seemed unlimited. Having observed Leo Beranek devote an enormous amount of personal effort in gathering architectural drawings and acoustical data on some 55 concert halls around the world for his seminal studies that were reported in *Music, Acoustics and Architecture* (Wiley, 1962), I was convinced initially, and remain so over forty years later, that there is no one better positioned to efficiently gather the technical and physical data on a hall than the consultants directly involved. Thus, within two years of the Chicago poster session, the society's first poster book was in print-to be followed by three others over the next eight years. Plaudits for what has been clearly a success story are due to the many willing contributors of posters to these four extremely popular ASA publications, each of which has gone through two or more printings.

With this latest edition, *Halls for Music Performance: Another Two Decades of Experience, 1982-2002*, the ASA proudly displays the diverse range of halls for music constructed since the first publication. A new generation of editors has brought together a comprehensive presentation of excellent work, by a great many design teams and acoustical consultants, to further stimulate communication amongst other acousticians and music hall designers the world over. What's more, this edition is further archival evidence of the value of poster sessions for many of the topics in architectural acoustics and the extraordinary value of the books that emanate from them. What better way to disseminate knowledge in architectural acoustics and to promote its practical applications?

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