

ACOUSTICS'08 PARIS ANATOMY OF A JOINT MEETING

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When the Acoustical Society of America, the European Acoustics Association, and the French Acoustical Society decided to hold a joint meeting, they never thought that it would be the largest acoustics meeting ever held with over 5,000 participants from 75 different countries!

This second joint meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) and the European Acoustics Association (EAA) was held from June 30 to July 4, 2008. The gathering of acousticians from around the world also included the bi-annual meetings of the European Conference on NOISE Control (eurnoise) and the European Conference on Underwater Acoustics (ecua). The meeting was hosted by the French Acoustical Society (Société Française d'Acoustique, SFA) on the occasion of its 60th anniversary. Due to the fact that it brought so many groups together, the meeting was named *Acoustics'08 Paris*. And as the front cover of this issue of *Acoustics Today* testifies, Paris is a beautiful city.

Some statistics

The breakdown of the 5,018 registrants into three categories is given in Table 1. An important goal set by the organizers was to draw a large number of students from around the world to attend *Acoustics'08 Paris*. This was realized with 980 students in attendance, many of whom received funding support from various sponsors, including ASA, EAA and SFA. There were twenty-five recipients of Best Student Paper Awards¹ and the architectural acoustics student design competition attracted 17 submissions.² The



in acoustics (Fig. 3). There were 252 oral sessions, and 167 poster sessions. The four plenary lectures presented at the meeting are listed in Table 3. All abstracts for the meeting are posted at www.acoustics08-paris.org/program. Also the abstracts, along with 1,100 full-length papers which include papers from eurnoise and ecua, will soon be available online at <http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/>.

Organizing the meeting

2002–2007

The overall planning of the meeting was a joint venture between the ASA, EAA, and SFA. Representatives from each of these organizations made visits to meetings of the other two during the six years prior to 2008 to discuss arrangements for *Acoustics'08 Paris* and to gain a better understanding of how each organization conducted its meetings. The EAA holds meetings every three years under the title *Forum Acusticum*, while the ASA has two meetings per year, and the SFA one meeting every second year. The titles of the technical fields share similar names among the three groups with the main difference being that EAA has a field called “computational acoustics” while the ASA’s counterpart is “signal processing in acoustics.” The selection of special sessions (called structured sessions by the EAA) began with a flurry of emails in 2006 between representatives from the three primary organizations and eurnoise and ecua. Final decisions on session titles were made in 2007 so they could be listed in the Call for Papers which was mailed and

Table 1. Registration Participants

Registered participants.....	4379
Accompanying persons.....	209
Visitors (exhibition, ceremonies).....	430
TOTAL	5018
Students.....	980

75 countries represented by attendees are listed in Table 2, and shown by continent in a pie chart in Fig. 1. *Acoustics'08 Paris* was held in the Palais des Congrès conference center (Fig. 2). The total number of abstracts was 3,547 which were organized into 419 sessions covering 13 different technical fields and education

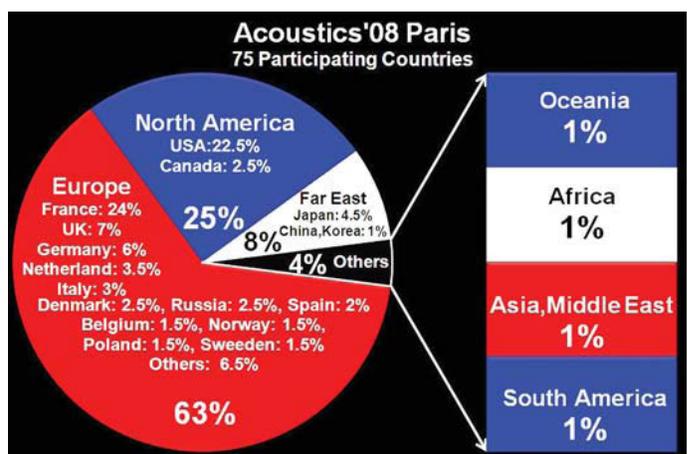


Fig. 1. Attendance distribution by continent.

Table 2. Countries participating

Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia

Table 3. Plenary lectures

“How sound from human activities affects marine mammals” Peter Tyack, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, MA, USA

“New trends in aeroacoustics: From acoustic analogies to direct numerical simulations” Daniel Juvé, Ecole Centrale de Lyon, France

“Binaural hearing and systems for sound production” Philip Nelson, University of Southampton, UK

“Optoacoustics: Can ultrasonic imaging become the preferred modality for molecular imaging?” Matthew O’Donnell, University of Washington, USA



Fig. 2. Palais des Congrès conference center.

placed on the web in early November. Around 500 acousticians from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean were involved at various levels in organizing the scientific part of the meeting. Thanks to their efforts, the presented papers and posters were of a high scientific standard.

Prior to January 2008 the plans for meeting space were based on projections between 2,000 and 2,500 participants. One can imagine the surprise of the members of the Organizing Committee when more than 3,000 abstracts were received on the day of the January 10th deadline! The prospect of a meeting with some 5,000 participants was very exciting, but at the same time made the organizers aware that more work and additional meeting space would be needed. After the abstracts were received, the next step was to create the scientific program. This is typically done at a Technical Program Organizing Meeting (TPOM). Arrangements for holding the *Acoustics'08* TPOM in Paris were made by Philippe Blanc-Benon, Didier Cassereau, Bertrand Dubus, Pascal Laugier and Manell Zakharia of the SFA with support from the ASA and EAA.

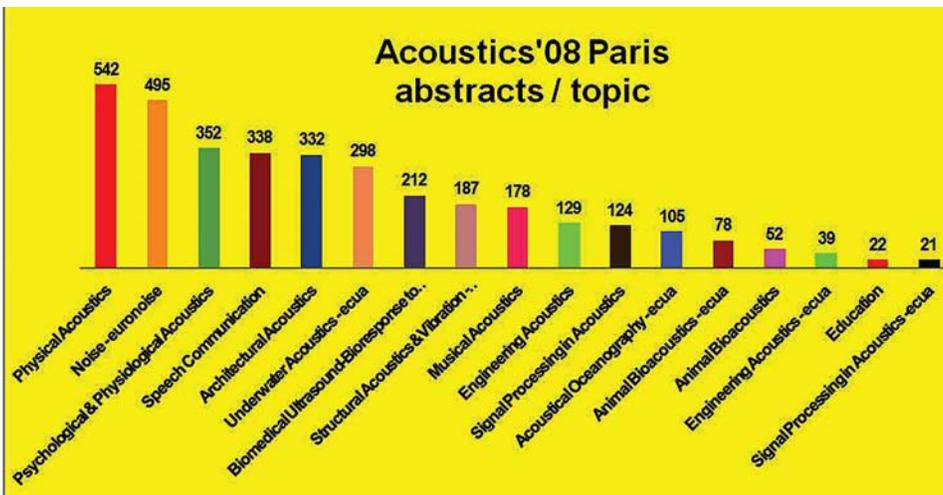


Fig. 3. Abstracts in each technical field.

February 14-15, 2008–The TPOM

Twenty-five representatives from the three primary organizations and euronoise and ecua met with members of the Organizing Committee in Paris on February 14



Fig. 4. Members of TPOM, Paris, February 2008.



Fig. 5. TPOM members inspect rooms at Palais des Congrès.

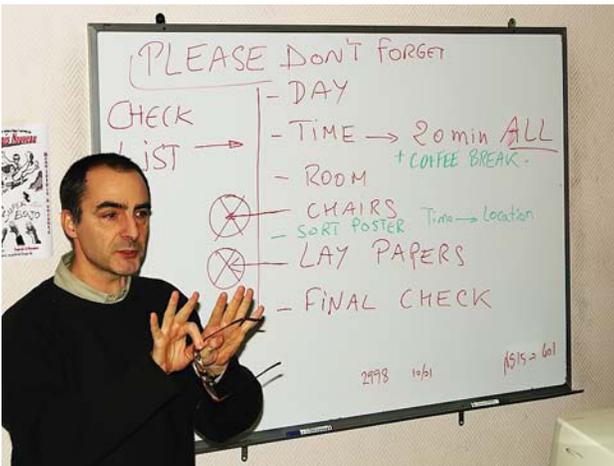


Fig. 6. Pascal Laugier explaining the abstract organization process.

and 15 (Fig. 4) at the Ecole Supérieure de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles (ESPCI is the site of the laboratory where Madame Curie discovered radium over a century ago). The TPOM representatives first inspected the meeting spaces in the Palais des Congrès (Fig. 5) and learned about the process for sorting abstracts (Fig. 6). Then they sorted papers into lecture and

poster sessions, and assigned times and meeting rooms and poster locations for each session. The large number of abstracts, and the fact that only 25 meeting rooms were available, made it necessary to assign a larger percentage of poster presentations than for a typical meeting. No lecture presentations were scheduled during the time allocated for posters to ensure that attendees would have adequate time to attend poster sessions.

The TPOM representatives were aided in their formidable task by a software management program which pre-sorted the abstracts by subject and session, and then allowed the representatives to manipulate papers electronically (Fig. 7) with some help by master computer controller Didier Cassereau (Fig. 8). The abstracts, along with their assigned times and locations, were arranged to minimize conflicts (Figs. 9 and 10). The sorted abstracts were then sent electronically across the Atlantic Ocean to ASA's headquarters in NY. There the ASA staff, headed by Elaine Moran, with the assistance of the American Institute of Physics, created the 1,000-page program which was mailed to ASA members. The completed program was then sent back electronically across the ocean to the EAA, where Dick Botteldooren, the editor of *Acta Acustica united with Acustica*, produced the meeting program for EAA members.



Fig. 7. TPOM members plan their technical sessions.

Table 4. Medals and awards recipients.

Acoustical Society of America

Gold Medal – Patricia Kuhl
Helmholtz-Rayleigh Interdisciplinary Silver Medal – James Candy
Distinguished Service Citation – Charles Schmid
R. Bruce Lindsay Award – Tyrone Porter
Medwin Prize in Acoustical Oceanography – Mark Trevorrow

European Acoustics Association

Lifetime Achievement in Acoustics – Gunnar Rasmussen
Promotion of Acoustics in Europe – FASE
Federation of Acoustical Societies of Europe
Outstanding Recent Scientific Publication in *Acta Acustica united with Acustica* – Catherine Guastavino, Brian Katz, Jean-Dominique Polack, Daniel Levitin, and Danièle Dubois

French Acoustical Society

Foreign Medal – Walter Lauriks
French Medal – Vitalyi Gusev

Further information may be found in the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* (Vol. 123, pp. 3468-3496) and *Acta Acustica united with Acustica* (Vol. 94, pp. S400-S528)



Fig. 9. Assigning times and rooms for sessions.

June 30–July 4, 2008–The Meeting

The opening session was held on Monday morning, June 30. SFA Co-chair Manell Zakharia, the primary organizer of the meeting, gave an introduction to the events for the week. He was followed by welcoming talks from the presidents of the three primary sponsoring organizations (Gilles Daigle, ASA; Luigi Maffei, EAA; Jean Kergomard, SFA) and ASA Co-Chair William Yost (Fig. 11). Mark Lipinski, Vice President for Region Île de France, gave an interesting talk in which he reviewed how *Acoustics'08 Paris* was rated to receive support funds from the French government. He reported that the conference received high scores on everything with the one exception—the low number of women registrants. Musician PuceMuse gave a sound and light performance which concluded the opening ceremony.

It is impossible to review the scientific contributions from this meeting in this article, other than to note that bringing so many experts from around the world to one site provided the opportunity for acousticians to delve into their own specific subjects as well as to learn what is current in related fields and acoustics in general. The poster sessions were held in the corridors, and drew large crowds (Fig. 12). Readers interested in highlights of the conference can read lay papers and press releases at www.acoustics.org under ASA's Worldwide Press Room. Three special sessions honored the contributions by Jens Blauert, Johan Sundberg, and the late Henning von Gierke. A special session was also dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC). There were 58 exhibitors that participated in the Exhibition including 52 companies and 6 scientific organizations, one of which was ASA (Fig. 13). In addition to the exhibits and scientific part of the meeting, there were a number of social events, including conference receptions and a special concert at the



Fig. 8. Didier Cassereau explaining the computer software.

church of St. Sulpice featuring its famous organ. Over 1,300 people enjoyed the banquet held at the Maison de la Chimie; 626 attended the student lunch, and 230 attended the Women in Acoustics luncheon. The medals and awards ceremony was jointly sponsored by the ASA, EAA, and SFA. The award recipients are listed in Table 4. A press conference was held at the meeting and many authors were interviewed by journalists during the week. The reporter for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) wrote articles covering the meeting in *Science* magazine.

Eight technical tours were conducted, including visits to the European Acoustics Lab in the Building Industry, the Aerotechnical Institute, and various sites related to musical acoustics (Musical Acoustics Lab, IRCAM, and a tour of the organs of Paris). The ASA and EAA technical committees met together, and the ASA's Public Relations Committee exchanged ideas with their European counterparts. Members from the ASA Student Council attended the meeting of EAA students who are looking into creating their own student council. The closing ceremonies on Friday featured an excellent performance by the jazz band Les Flagada Stompers. Also, Jonathan Rathsam, an American singer, and Renzo Vitale, a European piano player, both graduate students in acoustics, gave excellent renditions of some Gershwin tunes and the U.S. national anthem. (It was the 4th of July, America's Independence day.) Co-chairs Michael Vorländer, EAA; Bertrand Dubus, Manell Zakharia, SFA; and William Yost, ASA reflected on how successful *Acoustics'08 Paris* had been based on its scientific contributions and by providing a meeting place to renew or form new friendships with colleagues from around the world.

History of joint ASA/EAA meetings

1999—1st joint ASA/EAA meeting

The first joint meeting of ASA and EAA held in Berlin in March 1999 registered an attendance of 2,263. It combined the second EAA *Forum Acusticum*, the 137th meeting of the



Fig. 10. Technical Co-Chairs Michael Vorländer (EAA) and Bertrand Dubus (SFA) at TPOM.

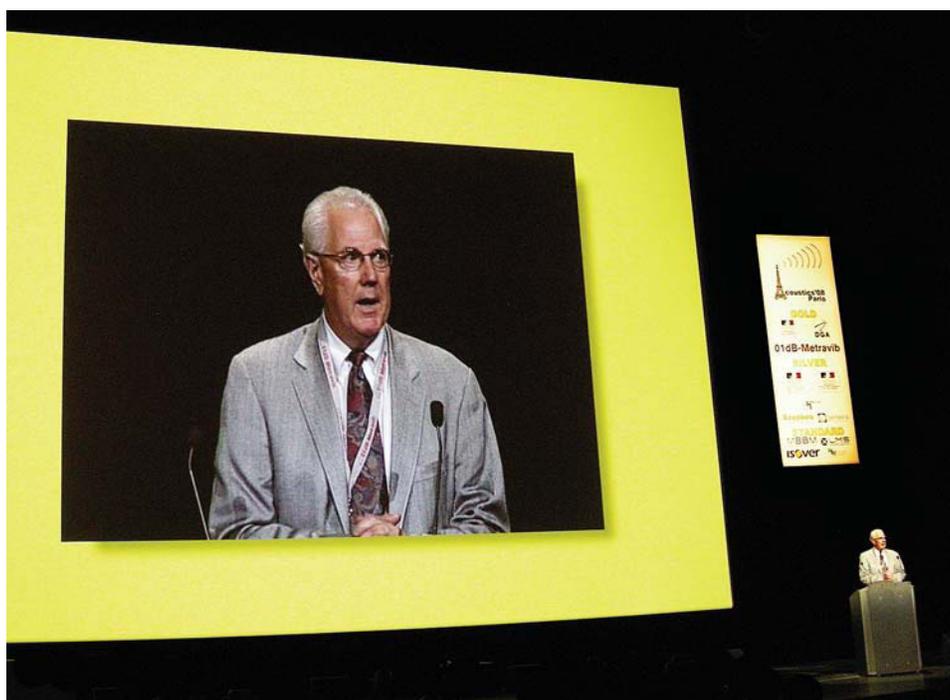


Fig. 11. *Acoustics'08 Paris* Co-Chair William Yost (ASA) welcomes participants at Opening Session.

ASA, and the 25th anniversary of the German Acoustics DAGA conference. Up until *Acoustics'08 Paris*, it had been the largest meeting held solely on acoustics. The idea for the first joint meeting began with preliminary talks in 1993.



Fig. 12. Poster sessions held in the Palais des Congrès.



Fig. 13. ASA exhibit booth (Elaine Moran (l) and Kelly Quigley (r)).



Fig. 14. Presidents Gilles Daigle (ASA)(l) and Luigi Maffei (r) (EAA).

Further discussions between the ASA and EAA resulted in the German Acoustical Society (DEGA) offering to hold the conference at the Technical University of Berlin with Michael Möser as general chair for the EAA and Jiri Tichy for ASA. The Technical Program Organizing Meeting (TPOM) was held in Norfolk, Virginia in 1998 with David Havelock as the technical program chair. The three organizations were represented at the meeting in Berlin by James West (President of ASA), Jens Blauert (Chair of EAA), and Jacob Scheuren (President of DEGA). The first joint meeting in 1999 built a strong foundation for holding the second joint meeting in Paris.

Acoustics'08 Paris—2nd joint ASA/EAA meeting

Based on the success of the first joint ASA/EAA meeting, it was inevitable that a second one would be considered. In September 2001, the SFA proposed Paris, France to be the site of the 2007 International Congress on Acoustics (ICA), with Manell Zakharia as general chair. Madrid was subsequently selected, and shortly thereafter representatives from the ASA consulted with the SFA to determine whether they would be interested in hosting the 2nd joint ASA/EAA meeting in Paris in 2008. The proposal for the joint meeting was approved by the boards of the SFA, the EAA, and the ASA by the end of 2001. A description of subsequent events beginning in 2002 is given above.

Conclusion

The second joint ASA/EAA meeting, like the first, provided an important avenue for advancing the many fields of acoustics. It brought together acousticians from Europe and North America as well as from other parts of the world, almost a thousand of whom were students. We believe this meeting created a sound basis for future collaboration. All of this was made possible thanks to funding support from 17 public and private sponsoring organizations (Table 5). We hope that *Acoustics'08 Paris* advanced the international dynamism of this discipline and invigorated the enthusiasm of the younger generation of acousticians in this ever changing world.

Table 5. Sponsoring organizations

Platinum: Île de France, THALES, SNCF, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, BARRISOL, ONR

Gold: 01 dB-Metravib, French Ministry of Defense

Silver: French Ministry of Environment, French Ministry of Research, Ecophon, Head acoustics, genesis

Standard: ISOVER, MBBM, LMS, CNRS
Conference supported by IEEE/OES

Finally, we note that extending a straight line based on two data points forecasts the next joint meeting in the year 2017. Nominations for a site are now open.[AT](#)

References

- ¹ Recipients of best student paper awards, www.acosoc.org/student/reports/reports.html
- ² Byron Harrison, "2008 Student Design Competition," *Acoustics Today* 4, 36 (2008).



Fig. 15. President Jean Kergomard (SFA) (r) discussing plans with Manell Zakharia (l)

Photo credit: Figure 2 by Aude Rohr
Figures 4-15 by Charles Schmid



Charles E. Schmid was selected to be the first executive director of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) in 1990. In that capacity he has been instrumental in arranging many international meetings that the ASA has held with the EAA, the Acoustical Society of Japan, the member societies for the first Pan-

American/Ibero-American meeting, and the International Congress on Acoustics held in Seattle in 1998. Before becoming Executive Director of the ASA he performed research in underwater acoustics as a Fellow of Honeywell Marine Systems in Seattle WA (1966-1990) and served as ASA's 1985/86 Congressional Science and Engineering Fellow in Washington D.C. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Cornell University, a Masters degree from the University of Connecticut, and a Ph.D. from the University of Washington, all in Electrical Engineering. Charles has served on the American Institute of Physics (AIP) Governing Board for 18 years, and is currently a board member of the International Commission for Acoustics. He is a Fellow of the ASA and received the Distinguished Service Citation at the Paris meeting.



Manell E. Zakharia has been active in the sonar area for more than 30 years with 346 publications and reports, supervised 17 Ph.D. and 31 Master theses, and 64 research contracts. In 1991, he founded the Laboratoire d'Acoustique, Systèmes Signaux et SONAR (LASSO/CPE Lyon), and was its head from 1991 to December 2000. In 2001, he joined the French Naval Academy in Brittany. He chaired the French

Acoustical Society (SFA) from 1992 to 1996 and contributed actively to the foundation of the EAA which he directed from 1996 to 1999. He founded and co-chaired the French Conference on Acoustics (1990), co-founded the European Conference on Underwater Acoustics (ecua), and has participated to more than 50 Conference Committees. His research work and interest are related to wideband sonar systems: bottom imaging, sub-bottom imaging and characterization, synthetic aperture sonar, surface acoustic waves, scattering and target recognition, time-frequency analysis and low frequency shallow water propagation and reverberation. Manell Zakharia is a member of the SFA, a Fellow of the ASA and a Senior Member of Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. He served as a co-chair of *Acoustics'08 Paris*.