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La Semaine du Son

This is the first in a series of articles in Acoustics Today that will talk about various international activities that focus on acoustics.

Introduction

La Semaine du Son (The Week of Sound) is a global initiative to consider sound as a fundamental element of personal balance in the relationship to others and to the world and is supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its main purpose is to promote several aspects of sound in our everyday life. The initiative began in 2003, and the first events were held in Paris in 2004, chaired by Christian Hugonnet, the founder and current president of the Association *La Semaine du Son*. Nowadays, the initiative has become global, with events called *The Week of Sound* in 12 countries.

A draft of the charter of *The Week of Sound* is being considered as a resolution for the Executive Board of UNESCO. The charter (located at <http://acousticstoday.org/charter>) expresses the aim of the association “to encourage every human being to realize that the sound is a fundamental element of personal balance in his relationship to others and to the world, in its economic, environmental, and social dimensions, as well as medical, industrial, and cultural. It considers sound matters as an access door to the world.”

The Association has organized several events since it was first launched in France in 2004. Events now take place every January in more than 80 French cities. Replicates have also been undertaken in 12 countries in Europe and in the Americas. The map at <https://goo.gl/mS8wUR> shows the places where *The Week of Sound* has been held.

The Main Topics

The main five topics and subtopics that the association promotes are listed in the charter. They are described below.

Sound Environment

This initiative involves promoting the understanding of the sound environment just as our culture understands climate or visual stimuli. An example is to compare society’s understanding of a sound scale with its understanding of the temperature scale in degrees Celsius. Murray Schafer, sponsor of the *7th Semaine du Son* in 2010 in France, describes in a very interesting interview his appreciation of how the sound environment has evolved in the last 40 years and how could initiatives like *The Week of Sound* collaborate to improve it (<https://youtu.be/JX9VzICmKpA>).

Health

This topic focuses on the awareness of noise effects on humans. The activities involve informing society and its representatives on the risks of noise and how noise affects human well-being. It encourages hearing tests as well as actions to control risks and supports research on the topic. During activities at the *10th Semaine du*

Son in 2013 in France, Christian Hugonnet talked about the effects of noise in an interview on French Radio RFI (<https://goo.gl/H5ixr3>).

Techniques for Recording and Sound Reinforcement

The activities in this topic are oriented toward two main objectives. The first is on sound and sound technology education, starting with the youngest child and continuing to professional levels. The second is the development of sound archives to collect and maintain our sound heritage.

Examples of activities on this topic can be found in the meeting reports of August 20-26, 2013, and May 12, 2016, of the Argentine section of the Audio Engineering Society (<https://goo.gl/MpJEQe>) and in meeting reports of August 25, 2014, and November 4, 2015, of the Colombian section of the Audio Engineering Society (<https://goo.gl/9wunCg>).

Sound and Picture Relationship

The main objective of this topic is to address the importance of sound and acoustics in audiovisual productions. The initiative considers sound design as an integral part of audiovisual work and live performance. The goals directly related with sound quality are to improve the sound quality of multimedia devices, integrate sound design into any event soundtrack, and encourage the development of cinema theaters with good acoustics. Other goals include regulations on loudness in broadcasting, teaching children about the quality relationships of sound and picture, and recognizing the creative contributions of professionals involved in sound design.

An interesting example of this topic is the workshop given by Jorge Arriagada, a well-known Chilean film composer, on music composition for films during *La Semana del Sonido 2015* in Mérida, Venezuela (<http://acousticstoday.org/musica>). Also during that *Week of Sound* in Mérida, David Rivera gave a conference on sound in US movies (<http://acousticstoday.org/cinema>).

Musical Expressions and Practice

The main idea of this topic involves the promotion of musical practice as a very interesting form to develop abilities and skills related to memory, teamwork, and socialization

as well as a way to fight against violence and exclusion. The initiative includes the promotion of places for collective musical practice in educational buildings and encouraging and facilitating musical practice not only at educational places but also at family and society events.

One example of these activities is the performance during *La Semana del Sonido 2012* in La Plata, Argentina, of a composition by Daniel Teruggi for tape and piano called “Autumn Song,” with pianist Nora García and Daniel Teruggi operating recorded material and mixer. A video of that performance can be found at <https://youtu.be/tzNPj5YA4YI>. Another example is the staircase at the administrative center in Brussels that was converted into a giant xylophone as part of *The Week of Sound 2014*. Each step produces a different xylophone sound under the pitch pressure as seen in this video at <https://youtu.be/aaeqWBjsqp0>. Jam sessions, musical presentations, and combined presentations as well as expositions on the physical, technological, social, and other aspects of music and musical practice take place in every *Week of Sound*.

Conclusion

La Semaine du Son is one of the very interesting initiatives happening internationally with sound and acoustics. Future *Sound Perspectives* articles will cover other international topics.

Biosketch



Ernesto Accolti is a professor at the National University of San Juan in Argentina. He received an engineering degree in sound and acoustics from the Technological University of Chile and a PhD in engineering from the National University of Rosario in Argentina. He is concluding a postdoctoral fellowship from

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