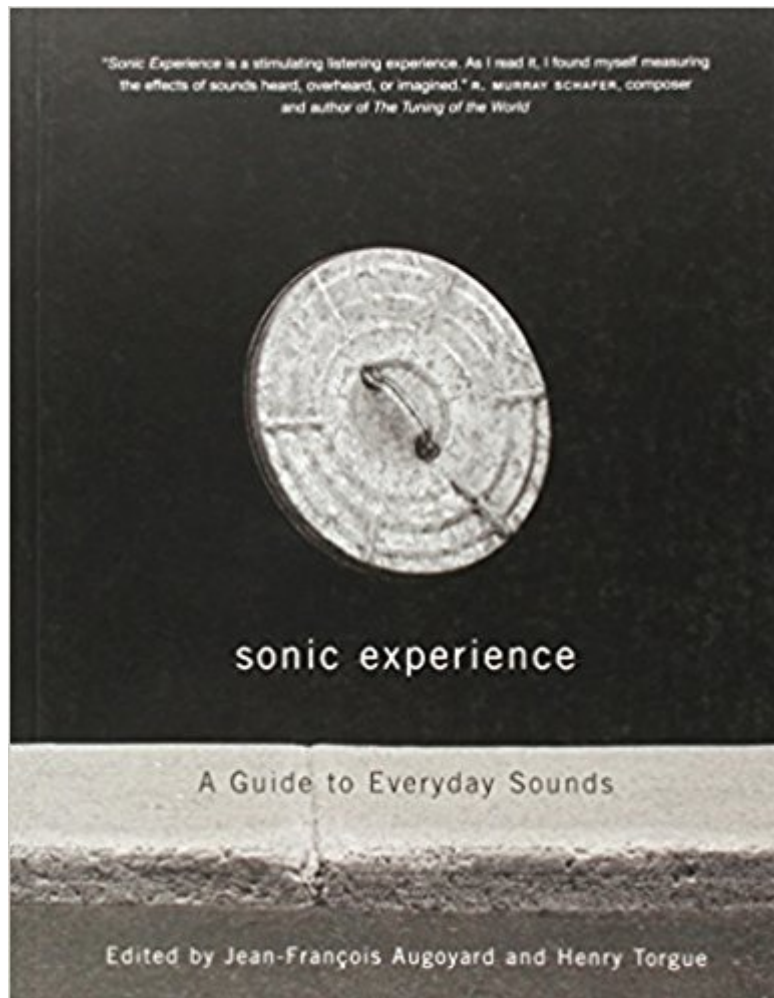




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Sonic Experience: A Guide To Everyday Sounds



Synopsis

A multidisciplinary work spanning musicology, electro-acoustic composition, architecture, urban studies, communication, phenomenology, social theory, physics, and psychology. It intends to rehabilitate general acoustic awareness, combining definitions and literary examples with technical information for specialists.

Book Information

Paperback: 230 pages

Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press (April 5, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 077352942X

ISBN-13: 978-0773529427

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,719,936 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Reggae](#) #962 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Recording & Sound](#) #54324 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling](#)

Customer Reviews

"Reading this book is like a stimulating listening experience: I found myself measuring the effects of sounds heard, overheard, or imagined." R. Murray Schafer, composer and author of *The Tuning of the World*

Jean-François Augoyard, a philosopher, urban planner, and musicologist, is the founder of CRESSON at the School of Architecture in Grenoble. Henry Torgue, a sociologist and urban planner, is a researcher at CRESSON and an author, pianist, and composer.

The book is well-written, usable either as a text or for personal interest and self-study. Good information and new ideas are here in good quantities. For example, nowhere else have I seen something explicitly on the filtering effects of balconies. On the downside, the book is ultimately thin in pages which is disappointing in that it could have been a great reference but instead remains more of an introduction.

I having been using this text in my fundamentals of sound studies class, and love it. The layout of the text, and the different ways in which it helps people are acquainted with sound as well as those who are new to it, is very good.

This book comes very short of delivering what would be expected from a ambitious and very interesting table of contents, it dwelves surprisingly long on matters like ubiquity and gives you disappointing two liners on matters like vibrato or flanger.

I don't imagine this work of painstaking and smart scholarship will ever burn up the nonfiction lists, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't get your hands on this. Augoyard and Torgue present a wonderful summary of the findings of The Centre for Research on Sonic Space and the Urban Environment (CRESSON). Some sonic phenomena get brief listings, like "asyndeton," a term usually found in verbal rhetoric (in sound, "asyndeton" is "The deletion from the perception or memory of one or many sound elements in an audible whole" [26]). It's all right that intriguing terms like this receive brief mention, because the picture starts to come together when they detail the phenomenology of such connected terms as "phonomnesia" or the less-exotic (but no less fascinating) phenomenon of repetition. When they do the longer write-ups, they discuss the phenomenon under several rubrics: Physical and Applied Acoustics, Architecture and Urbanism, Psychology and Physiology of Perception, Musical Aesthetics, Sociology and Everyday Culture, and Textual and Media Expressions. In other words, there is something for every sound enthusiast here. By the end of this book they have trained you to be a researcher in sound phenomenology while only introducing the tip of the iceberg in every case. My favorite term they present here is "sharawadji," an "exotic term, introduced in Europe in the seventeenth century by travelers returning from China, designat[ing] 'the beauty that occurs with no discernible order or arrangement.'"

Augoyard and Torgue go on to outline how sharawadji may occur in all the aforementioned rubrics. This book is thoroughly French in all the right ways, detailing the romance with sound that characterizes other "French" (or, if you will, Continental) greats like Beckett, Rimbaud, Varese, Cixous, Berio, et al. If you are a sound romantic like myself or souls like these, this book will likely stay at your side for a good long while.

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