

Internoise 2012, New York

SS: Memorial session for Rhona Hellman (chaired by Patricia Davies, Brigitte Schulte-Fortkamp, Sonoko Kuwano, Mary Florentine)

Title:

The importance of psychoacoustics in the USA – A personal view

Authors:

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Abstract:

Although the scientific discipline of psychoacoustics has a very long tradition, its spread and use are still limited. Further research is needed, but also established standards to fully benefit from the potential of psychoacoustics for a great variety of applications, such as environmental noise, product sound quality and even health issues.

In particular, from personal experience the US appeared to be less sensitive for sound quality issues in the past, and thus psychoacoustics did not have any great significance. It has clearly changed over the years and Rhona Hellman contributed to this development significantly. For example, not only has the psychoacoustic parameter loudness been standardized and acknowledged, but it is widely used for numerous scientific and industrial applications. Although the majority agrees upon the fact that the psychoacoustic parameter loudness is a much better indicator for the subjective sensation of volume than any sound pressure level based indicator, persistence and hard work were needed to gain this wide-spread acceptance. The paper will highlight the history of psychoacoustics over the last 30 years considering its general acknowledgement, standards and applications with special emphasis on the great contributions and achievements by Rhona Hellman in this context.

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