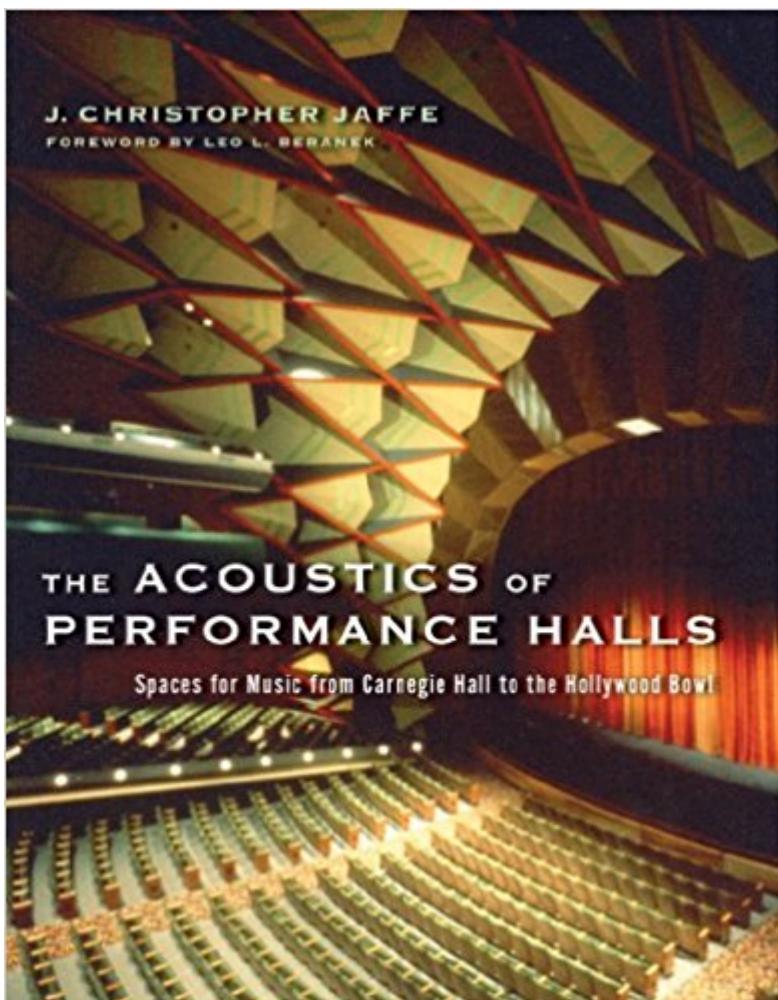


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# The Acoustics Of Performance Halls: Spaces For Music From Carnegie Hall To The Hollywood Bowl



## Synopsis

An acclaimed acoustician presents a proven methodology for designing successful venues for concert performance in a variety of building types. Of all the problems posed by the art and science of acoustics, the design of concert halls is the most mysterious. Listeners, from music lovers to musicians, hear performances in halls of comparable dimensions and find differences in the quality of their listening experiences. Why do so many concert halls fail to live up to expectations? In *The Acoustics of Performance Halls* J. Christopher Jaffe, an acclaimed acoustician known for his innovative design concepts, describes the common misconceptions about what makes a successful classical concert space, explains that sound reflections rather than geometry are the key to developing an outstanding hall, and shows how a series of simple principles related to how humans perceive musical quality can provide the ideal environment for classical music performances. Jaffe presents a proven methodology for designing successful venues for symphonic performance in a variety of building types, including concert halls, music pavilions, multiuse theaters, and amphitheaters, using a fact-based approach that relies on matching subjective values to quantitative measurements, an awareness of a community's musical memory, and extensive practical experience working with orchestras. Case studies illustrate the acoustic design of facilities designed for the presentation of symphonic music as well as those that were designed for other activities but through necessity or innovation are used for this purpose. An invaluable resource as a large-scale troubleshooting manual, this book should be required reading not only for acousticians but also for concert administrators, concert division directors, and operations managers, as well as theater consultants, architectural firms, and construction companies. 93 color photographs and diagrams, 20 black-and-white photographs and plans

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## Customer Reviews

“I am heartened in knowing that there are a few who care very few like [Jaffe] who know enough about acoustics to care about the sound from a musician’s point of view, and to look for that intangible magic and warmth that really makes for a great hall and an additional instrument for us to work with in performance.” - Isaac Stern, violinist, December 15, 1984  
“Thank you for the extraordinary work you did on transforming the sound of the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. It is truly a room in which all Americans can enjoy music under ideal conditions. Your professionalism, hard work, and good sense have blessed us with one of the finest halls in America.” - Lawrence Wilker, president emeritus of the John F. Kennedy Center  
“The best new hall that I know of is the one built for the University of New Mexico by Christopher Jaffe, which Munich might do well to emulate.” - Lorin Maazel, Music Director Emeritus, Cleveland Orchestra-New York Philharmonic Orchestra  
“Possessing a wonderful acoustical equilibrium, Bass Performance Hall is one of those in which music heard by the audience is the same as that heard by the performer. The clarity of sound heard throughout the entire range, in addition to the warm and welcoming environment, makes Bass Hall one of the finest halls.” - Yo Yo Ma, cellist, October 10, 2000  
“[A]ll you ever wanted to know about sound but were afraid to ask.” This lavishly illustrated book should interest not only technicians but anyone who ever turned to his neighbor and said “Can you hear the violins? I can.”  
“The Norwalk Hour” - The Norwalk Hour  
“[A] handsome book.”  
“A copiously illustrated.”  
“An entertaining overview with much useful information.”  
“Musical America” - Musical America  
“[A] thoroughly enjoyable, informative, and entertaining treatment of spaces for performance, a review of some of their major afflictions, and a compact guide to a wide array of successes.” - The BAS Speaker (Official Publication of the Boston Audio Society)

J. Christopher Jaffe has been a consultant in acoustics for half a century. With a background in engineering, theater, and music, he has designed concert halls and symphonic music pavilions for dozens of America’s top orchestral ensembles, including the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the National

Symphony. Noted for his innovative design concepts, starting with the Stagecraft Orchestral Shell (developed with Boris Goldovsky, director of the Tanglewood Opera Theatre) in 1959, Jaffe also developed the tunable/coupled orchestra shell, the concert hall shaper, and the "Cab Forward" design approaches to multiuse concert facilities described in this book. He has worked with many of America's most talented theater architects, including Philip Johnson, I. M. Pei, Frank O. Gehry, Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, Rafael Viñoly, and David Schwarz. When not consulting for Acentech Inc, he divides his time between his home in Connecticut and a camp on Loon Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. Most recently he won the 2011 Acoustical Society of America's Wallace Clement Sabine Medal for his efforts to further the knowledge of architectural acoustics.

J. Christopher Jaffe's book is a rich discussion of the art and science of performance hall acoustics. As other reviewers have noted it is "lavishly illustrated." Indeed the photographs are striking. Unfortunately some technical graphics are so dark and small as to render them almost useless. This may be a fault of the Chinese printers or perhaps the editor's choice of thumbnail size inserts. The blame doesn't matter but the quality should have been corrected before issuing the book. Dr. Jaffe deserves better.

I am a third year Architect undergraduate student at UNM and this has been a great help for me to make decisions regarding acoustics and materials.

Fascinating. I have something new to enjoy when I go to concert halls!

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is an easy read, with just the right amount of technical information. Anyone who is in the position of making decisions regarding music performance spaces should read this book. I plan to purchase another one to share with administrators who will decide on the scope and funding of performance spaces. J. Steven Moore, author of *Play It From the Heart: What you learn from music about success in life.* [[ASIN:1610483707] *Play it from the Heart: What You Learn From Music About Success In Life*

Excellent book on acoustics by a pioneer!

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