

# Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?



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We experience spaces not only by seeing but also by listening. We can navigate a room in the dark, and "hear" the emptiness of a house without furniture. Our experience of

music in a concert hall depends on whether we sit in the front row or under the balcony. The unique acoustics of religious spaces acquire symbolic meaning. Social relationships are strongly influenced by the way that space changes sound. In *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?*, Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter examine auditory spatial awareness: experiencing space by attentive listening. Every environment has an aural architecture. The audible attributes of physical space have always contributed to the fabric of human culture, as demonstrated by prehistoric multimedia cave paintings, classical Greek open-air theaters, Gothic cathedrals, acoustic geography of French villages, modern music reproduction, and virtual spaces in home theaters. Auditory spatial awareness is a prism that reveals a culture's attitudes toward hearing and space. Some listeners can learn to "see" objects with their ears, but even without training, we can all hear spatial geometry such as an open door or low ceiling. Integrating contributions from a wide range of disciplines--including architecture, music, acoustics, evolution, anthropology, cognitive psychology, audio engineering, and many others--*Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?* establishes the concepts and language of aural architecture. These concepts provide an interdisciplinary guide for anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of how space enhances our well-being. Aural architecture is not the exclusive domain of specialists. Accidentally or intentionally, we all function as aural architects.

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