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CURRENT REVIEWS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Blessner, Barry. **Spaces speak, are you listening?: experiencing aural architecture**, by Barry Blessner and Linda-Ruth Salter. MIT, 2007. 437p bibl index afp ISBN 0262026058, \$39.95

Blessner (formerly, engineering, MIT) and Salter (an independent scholar interested in the intersection of art and technology) have collaborated on a fascinating, important book on the complex ways in which auditory experiences influence perception of one's immediate environment. The authors take the reader on a wonderful historical, scientific, and cultural tour, highlighting the interface between technology and the arts. They point out that auditory experiences have emotional and cognitive components as well as sensory ones. Illustrating the richness of auditory space perception, the authors review venues ranging from caves and cathedrals to amphitheaters and concert halls, covering matters as diverse as architecture, reverberation, echolocation, neurobiology, and traditional and electronic music. This well-written demonstration that science applies to real life will interest readers in many disciplines: acoustics, architecture, interior design, computer science, psychology, cognitive science, art, anthropology, and music, to name just a few of many. Concepts such as "aural texture" and "spatial acoustics" mesh beautifully with contemporary concerns about such matters as noise pollution, the design of home theaters, and listening to music on an iPod versus in a concert hall. This is a rewarding interdisciplinary account of sound and space.

Summing Up: Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers.

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