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ACOUSTICS OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE THEATRICAL BUILDINGS

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- CHINESE OPERA, Greece Tragic-comedy and Indian Sanskrit Play are the three oldest dramatic art forms. But only Chinese opera is still performing today.
- CHINESE OPERA has become a traditional art form since Yuan Dynasty (1271 - 1368) and became popular among common people.
- CHINESE OPERA is a comprehensive performing art which combines singing, music, dialogue, acrobatics, martial arts, and pantomime. It represents the culmination and distillation of two thousand years of Chinese civilization.





- Over the past 800 years, Chinese opera has evolved into many different regional varieties based on local traits and accents.
- The use of local dialects and unique melodies distinguish the different styles of opera. Today, there are over 300 dazzling regional opera styles.







A SONG DYNASTY PAINTING (12TH CENTURY)



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF CHINESE OPERA

A Tea House Theatre (Late 19th Century)





P.



- Accompanied by traditional music instruments, actors present unique melodies as well as dialogues which were beautifully written and of high literary value.
- For Chinese, especially older folks, to listen to this kind of opera with various arias is a real pleasure.









Shakepeare: Midsummer Night's Dream

Played by Teachers and students of American School in Shar Shanghai Evening Post May 7,2001





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 In 19th Century Chinese Opera was dominated by a form called Beijing Opera (*Jingju*) featuring colorful costumes, elaborate make up, exaggerated facial expressions, spoken and sung in Mandarin dialect.















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- The acting of Chinese opera is based on allusionary gestures, such as: riding a horse, rowing a boat, or opening a door just expressed by body movements.
- Therefore, a battle between rival troops could be performed on a very small stage, around 50 sq. meters; or historical events spanning hundreds of years could be performed without changing settings.



BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF CHINESE OPERA

The play QIU RIVER depicts the scene of taking a boat to the cross river by performing with dance in an exquisite, fictitious and artistic expression.





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The play shows a young lady's emotion when she faces a love



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- Performing according to the principle of imaginary actions.
- No realistic stage settings required.

 One table & two chairs are sufficient for most performances.







PART 2

ARCHITECTURAL & ACOUSTICAL FEATURES



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- THREATRICAL BUILDINGS in China could be traced back to a long history and had well developed during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, 11th – 14th Centuries.
- **PAVILION STAGE** opened on three sides, thrusting into the audience area is the most prevailing form in traditional Chinese theatres





PAVILION STAGE opened on three sides , thrusting into the audience area is the sterotype and the most prevailing form in traditional Chinese theatres





PAVILION STAGE FUNCTIONED AS A **REFLECTING SHELL** ENCHANCES THE SOUND DIRECTING TO THE AUDIENCE, AND PROVIDES **SELF-SUPPORT** TO THE SINGER.





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Raised stage benefits both hearing and viewing







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 Under the raised stage, courtyard theatres are often placed main entrance to courtyard

Shan Shaan Gan Guild Courtyard Theatre, Kaifeng, henan







- High acoustics satisfaction is the major enjoyment of the audience.
- The expression for 'OPERA GOING' in Beijing remains as TO LISTEN OPERA up to the present





 A comparatively rational disposition of the performers resulting in a better acoustic effect.
MUSICAL ACCOMPANISTS playing behind ACTORS was a common arrangement in the ancient time.









TRADOTIONAL OPERA USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY A SMALL BAND OF 5-7 MUSICIANS

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MUSICIANS BEHIND THE MOON GATE

Quanjin Guildhall, Suzhou 苏州全晋会馆



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5 10 15m



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山西 阳城县 郭峪村 汤帝庙戏台

传统戏曲表演伴奏乐队(场面)位置变迁 Left side usually only for acrobatic plays



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1. OPEN-AIR AMPHITHEATRE The original type in the ancient time.

2. COURTYARD THEATRE

Courtyard flanked by single- or two story galleries prevailed in China since Ming Dynasty (15th century).

3. AUDITORIUM THEATRE

Built since 18th century as the roof structure of large span became practicable, and suited to the need of regular dairy performances.





EARLIEST AMPHITHEATRES EXISTED IN SHANXI

A.D.1283 BUILT

A.D.1324 BUILT

山西魏村牛王庙戏台 (1283)

山西翼城乔泽庙 (1324)



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AMPHITHEATRE, FACING THE LAKE



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THE GRAND COURTYARD THEATRE

FORBIDDEN CITY, BEIJING (A.D. 1776)

ONE OF THE LARGEST STAGES



STAGE AREA : 586 M2 Institute of Acoustics, Tongji Universit











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AUDITORIUM THEATRE





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天津广东会馆 Guangdong Guildhall, Tianjin (1905)









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北京湖广会馆



Zhengyici, Beijing (1792)









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PART 3

ACOUSTICS OF COURTYARD THEATRES



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- Courtyard Theatres were the prevailing form in the Traditional Chinese Theatrical Buildings. The absence of a roof means little reverberation and a non-diffuse sound field.
- Classic room acoustics, such as Sabine RT formula, is developed for an enclosed space, closed off on all sides.
- Does it still suitable for a non-enclosed space, or an open-top space ?





- Reverberation means the persistence of sound in an enclosed space after a source of sound has stopped.
- Reverberation Time (RT) defined by Sabine at the end of 19th century is the time required for sound pressure level to decrease 60 dB after the source has stopped.
- RT usually is expressed as T₆₀.









Sabine Formula Only For

- An enclosed space
- A diffused sound field
- A live room with low absorption





Absorption in A Room

he absorbing power A of the room is measured in open-

window units.

m² open-window means a unit of absorption, i.e., 100% of

the incident sound at that area escaped from the enclosure,



no reflections to the room. Institute of Acoustics, Tongji University, Shanghai





A typical courtyard theatrical building, Sanshan Gild House, Shanghai (1905)







Sanshan Gild House Shanghai, 1905





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3D sound distributions for spaces with or without ceiling

(animated rays shown in plan)

simulated by Ecotect Software
Top closed

Top opened





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3D sound distributions for spaces with or without ceiling (animated rays shown in plan) Top open

Top closed





IEEE IUS 2008 3D sound distributions for spaces with or without ceiling (animated rays shown in section) **Top close** Top open 50ms 50ms 100ms 100ms 150ms 150ms 200ms 200ms



Comparison of following two cases

Example space : 25m×16m×4.5m



Top-Open Space (no roof)

(open area / Total surface area = 34%)







- T30 (-5dB -35dB) shows little difference similar decay rate
- Fine structures of both echograms show significant difference

ACOUSTICS OF COURTYARD THEATRES

Comparison of Normal Modes

Example: 15m×25m, H=4.5m, number of normal modes calculated at the center frequency with a band width of 10 Hz,

Number of Normal Modes Calculated

	63Hz	125Hz	250Hz	500Hz	1000Hz	2000Hz
A w/ roof	29	103	385	1490	5856	23223
B no roof	20	63	213	786	3011	11778
(A-B) / A Lost factor	31%	40%	45 %	47%	48%	49%



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225 Receiving Points @ 1m apart for Digital Simulation





T30 (s) Calculated Median

w/ roof	2.45 s	84 % at ± 0.1 s
no roof	1.66 s	63 % at ± 0.1s

T30 - RT calculated from -5 dB to -35 dB decay

EDT (s) Calculated Median

w/ roof	2.26 s	62% at ± 0.1 s	
no roof	0.98 s	60% at ± 0.1 s	

EDT - Early Decay Time, RT calculated from first 10 dB decay








G Calculated Median

w/ roof	6.4dB	70% at ± 0.1s
no roof	2.4dB	38% at ± 0.1s

G - Strength factor





ATTENUATION OF STRENGTH FACTOR G (dB) vs. DISTANCE r FROM SOURCE MEASURED IN EIGHT COURTYARD THEATRES





Effects of Surrounding Wall Height for a Open-Top Space

	RT ′	
Wall Height	500Hz	1000Hz
H = 4.5m	1.79 s	1.86 s
H = 8m	2.40 s	2.47 s
H = 12m	2.88 s	2.96 s



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- Do the acoustic results can be predicted by classic equations ?
- No!
- Actual results are far from predictions by following eqs, as these eqs. are valid only for diffused sound field.

RT equation : $T = 0.163 V / (S \alpha)$

SPL distribution equation: $L_p = L_w + 10 \lg \left| \frac{1}{4\pi} \right|$

- $L_{p} = L_{w} + 10 \lg \left(\frac{1}{4\pi r^{2}} + \frac{4}{R}\right) (dB)$
- Their reverberant effects are also differ significantly even with same predicted RT values.



G differences (dB) for the spaces w/ & w/no roof

Receiving area $15m \times 15m @1m \times 1m$, h=1m 15m×25m, H=4.5m Simulated by Odeon software Source (4, 9, 1.5)



- G drops due to lost all reflections from ceiling
- G drops much more at rear area(>4dB)
- SPL distribution therefore becomes more uneven



• Global Theatre (Shakespearean theatre), London, 1614





Figure 8.6 (a) Plan and (b) longitudinal perspective section of a Shakespearean theatre, London.







Global Theatre, London, 1614 (rebuilt 1923)



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Ancient Greek & Roman Theatres









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Ancient Greek & Roman Theatres

RT test results in three ancient open-theatres in Greece

	Capacity	RT .
Epidaurus	14,000	0.2 sec
Dodoni	17,000	0.18 sec
Odeion	2,300	0.13 sec

 LITTLE REVERBRANCE PERCEIVED in these theatres reported by the *investigators*

Vassilantonopoulos S.L., et al., A study of ancient Greek and Roman theater Acoustics ACTA ACUSTICA / ACUSTICA, Vol.89 (2003) 123-136.





Ancient Greek & Roman Theatres

Greek Theatre in Segesta, Italy

- Capacity : 4,000
- Measured RT : 0.4 sec (mid-frequency)
- Little reverbrance
- A. Daniele, M. Guilo, et al., A study of the acoustic qualities of the ancient theatre in Segesta. Proc. ICA 2004, Japan, Part III, 2349-2352.





Echogram in Epidauros Theatre (T= 0.2 s)





Aspendos Roman Theatre, Turkey

Field measurement & Odeon simulation : RT = 1.8 s ! ?





Gade A C, Lisa M, et al., Roman Theatre acoustics: Comparison of acoustic . measurements and simulation results from the Aspendos Theatre, Turkey. Proc. ICA 2004, IV-2953-56.



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Questions For The Test And Simulation

Aspendos Theatre, Turkey (Gade et al, 2004)

Theatre diameter: 59m Capacity : 7,000 seats

- Measured SPL attenuation vs. distance very close to that in a free field
- Little reverberance was reported by the investigators
- WHY the measured RT and simulated RT by Odeon both reach as high as 1.8 sec !?





Tanglewood Music Shed, MA, USA

(V = 42,000m2, N = 5100)

Open area at side and rear walls less than 8% of total hall surface approx.

> Mid freq occup. RT = 1.9 sec Good reputation in acoustics









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COMMENTS

- Classic 3D-RT parameter does not suitable for a roofless space due to a quite non-diffused sound field existed
- Measured T30 in a roofless space should be denoted as 2.5D RT to avoid misleading
- Echogram in a roofless space shows significant difference with that in an enclosure due to lack of reflections from top surface, therefore affects the reverbrance
- Different opening area and its location affect the acoustics to a considerable extent
- Strength factor G(dB) and then C80 (dB) might be the more important parameters for a courtyard theater





SUBJECTIVE TEST IS REQUIRED TO DISTINGUISH THE PERCEIVED REVERBERATION IN AN OPEN-TOP SPACE









CASE A

WHEN DIRECTIVITY OF THE REFLECTIONS IS ABSENT, PERCEIVED REVERBARTION IS ONLY DETERMINED BY THE DECAY RATE

CASE B

PERCEIVED REVERBARTION IS STRONGLY AFFECTED BY THE DIRECTIVITY OF THE REFLECTIONS PRESENTED, EVEN AT THE SAME DECAY RATE





CASE A

- EARLY DECAY IS IMPORTANT TO THE PERCEIVED REVERBERATION
- LATE DECAY MAY HAVE SOME INFLUENCE TO THE PERCEIVED REVERBERATIION

CASE B

■ WHEN THE DIRECTIVITY OF RELECTIONS IS PRESENTED, PERCEIVED REVERBERATION MAINLY DETERMINED BY THE DECAY RATE

Classic RT considered the decay rate only



Echograms only demonstrate the fine structure of the reflections vs time, nothing about their directivity





- The perceived reverbrance in an enclosed space mainly determined by the decay rate as the sound field is considerably diffused.
- To our experience, the perceived reverbrance in a roofless space might be also affected by the fine structure of the echogram and the directivity distribution of those reflections. The last effect was unknown before.





COURTYARD THEATRE IS A SPECIAL CASE IN ROOM ACOUSTICS, BUT RECEIVED LESS INVESTIGATION IN THE PAST

MORE WORK IS NEEDED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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A SHORT VIDEO RECORDING SHOWING THE TRADITIONAL THEATRICAL THEATRE & OPERA PERFORMANCE AS FOLLOWING







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