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SHORTLY after Christmas in 1928, a small group of physicists and engineers who were professionally related by their common interest in acoustical phenomena attended a meeting held at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York City to consider forming an acoustical society. Before another year had elapsed the first regular meeting of the Acoustical Society of America had taken place and been judged a success, a constitution and bylaws had been drafted and ratified, and the new Society with its charter membership of more than four hundred and fifty had elected a slate of officers and had been incorporated in the State of New York as a legal corporate body. At the time of this writing, some twenty-two years later, the Acoustical Society has a total membership of about sixteen hundred.

During the boom years of the late 1920's architectural acoustics went through a vigorous and active period of development, largely as a result of the introduction of sound as an important element in motion picture technology and of the resulting need for improved acoustical design in theatres and auditoriums. The need for closer contact between research laboratories working on various aspects of acoustics and the engineers responsible for installation of acoustical devices and materials gave much of the impetus responsible for the founding of the Acoustical Society of America.

The possibility of forming an organization of acoustical engineers and scientists was first discussed privately in a West Coast meeting early in 1928 attended by F. R. Watson, Vern O. Knudson, and Wallace Waterfall, and a course of action was decided upon. Letters subsequently were sent to a small group of men who seemed potentially the most promising supporters of a professional organization in acoustics, and a nucleus of charter members was thus developed. It was strongly felt by several of those responding that the scope of the proposed organization might well be enlarged to attract workers in all branches of acoustics rather than to confine it to the more limited region of architectural acoustics. Harvey Fletcher, who later was to become the first president of the Acoustical Society, made it possible for the facilities of the Bell Telephone Laboratories to be used as a meeting place, and on the 27th of December, 1928, a gathering of some forty interested persons took the initial steps toward founding the Society. The first regular meeting took place on May 10 and 11, 1949, with 183 persons in attendance.

The Acoustical Society of America has for its aims

ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY

of America

the increase and diffusion of the knowledge of acoustics and the promotion of its practical applications. Recent years have seen notable advances in a wide range of acoustical subjects, especially in the theory of sound measurements and of speech and hearing, in ultrasonics, in sonic devices relating to undersea warfare, and in audio communication. A further listing of acoustical subjects, even a highly abbreviated one, would have to include mention of work done in music and musical instruments research, psychoacoustics, and the development of acoustical instrumentation.

The membership of the Acoustical Society is a composite group made up for the most part of laboratory scientists working in either fundamental or applied research and of professional engineers who are interested in the practical applications of acoustics for the benefit of the public. It includes physicists, psychologists, physiologists, architects, musicians, and acoustical, radio, electrical, and mechanical engineers.

Five categories of membership in the Society have been established, namely, Honorary Members, Fellows, Members, Associates, and Sustaining Members. Honorary Membership is restricted to persons of outstanding eminence in acoustics who have been elected by a unanimous vote of the Society's Executive Council. Candidates for Fellowship in the Society must have rendered conspicuous service or made notable contributions to the advancement or diffusion of the knowledge of acoustics or the fostering of its practical applications. Members must be active in acoustics and must possess either an academic degree or its equivalent in scientific or professional acoustics or in a closely related field. Only Fellows and Members in good standing may vote or hold office in the Acoustical Society. Associates of the Society need have only an interest in acoustics. Sustaining Members include persons, corporations, or organizations contributing fifty dollars or more annually to the Acoustical Society.

While the professional interests of the membership are extensive and diverse, the Society has not as yet formed any specialized divisions or local sections, although provision has been made in the constitution for the formation of regional chapters. Meetings have ordinarily been held twice each year, one in the spring and a second in the fall.

The official publication of the Society is *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, which for many years has been the only scientific journal in the world

devoted entirely to acoustics. When the Society was formed, the publication of a journal was recognized as an important element in the organization. An editorial committee was appointed to supervise the proposed *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, and the first issue appeared in October 1929 under the editorial guidance of the Society's secretary, Wallace Waterfall, who continued (with the aid of an editorial board) to edit the publication until 1933. At that time the position was made an elective office of the Acoustical Society, and F. R. Watson was elected editor and served two three-year terms. He was succeeded by Floyd A. Firestone, who is the present editor. First published quarterly, the *Journal* now appears every second month, and, like the journals of the other Member Societies of the American Institute of Physics, it is published for the Acoustical Society by the Institute.

Although meetings and journal publication are the principal means by which the Society fulfills its purpose of advancing acoustical science, a great many useful contributions have also been made by the various special committees of the Acoustical Society. Shortly after the Society was formed, a committee was appointed to consider the standardization of acoustical terms. Its report, submitted in 1931, was helpful in defining the language of acoustics at a time when the precise meaning of terms was fundamental to understanding within a Society representing widely separated branches of science and engineering.

The Society has continued its activity on standardization of acoustical measurements and instruments and since January 15, 1932 has been sponsor of the American Standards Association Committee on Acoustical Measurements and Terminology. Other committees of the Society have been active in the fields of noise measurement and abatement, ultrasonics, architectural acoustics, and music.

The Acoustical Society of America awards \$100 biennially to a "Member or Fellow of the Society who is under thirty-five years of age and who, during a period of two or more years immediately preceding the award, has been active in the affairs of the Society and has contributed substantially, through published papers, to the advancement of theoretical and/or applied acoustics". The award is made in each even-numbered year.

Communications to the Society should be addressed to the Secretary, Acoustical Society of America, 57 East 55th Street, New York 22, New York.