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#### Cambridge meeting - Stringed Instruments

The Musical Acoustics Network held a meeting in Cambridge on 24 April, focusing on stringed instruments and organised by Jim Woodhouse. About 100 participants attended the one-day meeting, including scientists from a range of disciplines, instrument makers and performers. The format was designed to encourage debate, and in this it was very successful. The morning was devoted to an overview of violin and guitar acoustics which produced a spirited discussion. This highlighted the different agendas of physicists, perceptual scientists and instrument makers: the scientists tend to think of proceeding in easy stages, doing definitive studies of each aspect, while the makers want to leap ahead to the "punch line" and investigate issues of direct significance at the workbench. Passionate views were expressed on all sides of this debate, in a very good-humoured way.

In the afternoon the meeting heard short presentations from four invited speakers. Martin Schleske and Joseph Curtin are arguably the two most innovative violin makers in the world today, and they each gave stimulating talks about the role of new materials, acoustical measurements and design innovations in their work. Ian Cross, who had opened the meeting with a short performance on the classical guitar, then donned his academic hat and gave a talk about some of the issues and paradoxes which must be faced by anyone trying to understand musical perception. Finally, Claudia Fritz gave a tantalising summary of work in progress on a project to use "virtual violins" to investigate the link between measurable acoustics of a violin body and the perception of its sound. This included a live demonstration of a real-time system in which a mute electric violin could be played through a digital-filter realisation of the body vibration response. This allows rapid switching between different simulated violin bodies.

However, the formal meeting on the Friday was by no means the whole story. A group of key participants arrived in Cambridge and started talking on the Thursday, and continued with only brief pauses for sleep until Sunday evening. When they reluctantly left, they were all talking about plans for further meetings to continue this fruitful interaction. There can be no doubt that the conversations started during this meeting will have a very significant influence on the continuing research in the interesting area of correlating construction, acoustics and perceptual questions about musical instruments.

#### News and Events

Upcoming Event: **MAN Summer Meeting**: School of Physics, University of Edinburgh, 20-21 June 2007. [Full details...](#)

**Coming soon**: Bradford meeting report; MAN/GSAM-SFA conference presentations; Music & Disability report...

Musical Acoustics Network Conference: London 20-21 September 2006. [Details](#)

#### Further Information

If you are interested in joining the Network, or if you would like to be kept informed of its activities, please contact:

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