

## FOREWORD

### Special issue on spatial hearing

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It is my great pleasure that this special issue is now released with attractive reviews, papers, and acoustical letters.

The planning of this special issue dates from the Spring Meeting of the Acoustical Society of Japan in March 2001. Within a certain poster session at the meeting, there were quite a number of presentations concerning HRTFs and spatial hearing covering a wide range of topics from basic psychoacoustics to hardware realization. Since most of these posters were displayed on the both side of one aisle in the session room, I called that aisle “HRTF corridor.” This HRTF corridor exceedingly impressed not only me but also many other colleagues, including Prof. Masayuki Morimoto and Dr. Kazuhiro Iida. After the meeting, we three discussed the possibility of realizing a workshop on spatial hearing and it was realized as an informal domestic workshop in Miyagi Zao Royal Hotel in Mt. Zao area near Sendai in June 2002. This two-day-long, stay-together workshop featured 30 presentations and included over 70 attendants from all over Japan. All the attendants rediscovered the gravity and breadth of this field. Since no official proceedings were prepared for this workshop, and since the presentations had been in Japanese, Dr. Tatsuya Hirahara proposed that we plan a special issue on spatial hearing for this Journal, AST, to present in English to the international community the wide range of activity in this field in Japan.

This proposal was accepted by the Editorial Board in June and I was appointed as the Guest Editor of this special issue. I then discussed the outline of the special issue with the above-mentioned colleagues as well as the associate editor appointed to take charge of this special issue, Prof. Kenji Ozawa. As a result, we decided to feature a few invited articles other than ordinary contributed papers and acoustical letters. First, Prof. Jens Blauert, who coined the word “spatial hearing,” accepted our invitation and submitted with his colleagues a very interesting invited paper on the localization of a direct sound source in the presence of reflected sounds. We also invited two very prominent researchers working on spatial hearing in Japan.

Prof. Masanao Ebata, who first showed the spatial unmasking characteristic in the free field in 1968, extensively reviewed studies on spatial unmasking and attention. Also, Prof. William Martens, who has been keenly working on basics and applications of VAD (virtual auditory displays), reviewed the development of technology to spatially position auditory images via earphones when no reflected sound is included in the simulation. These featured articles really form the core of this special issue, prompting readers to consider the significance of spatial hearing research. It should be also mentioned that these three articles are peer reviewed as were the other contributed papers and acoustical letters.

Other than these invited articles, twenty-five manuscripts were submitted for this special issue and were peer reviewed under the ordinary process of AST. We are very proud of the resultant line-up of this special issue consisting of seven papers, one technical report and nine acoustical letters. Together, these cover most of the significant topics relating to the science and technology concerned with spatial hearing. It is a characteristic of acoustics in Japan that science and technology are well balanced and the contents of this special issue exhibit a typical realization of this good characteristic. We are confident that with this special issue readers will be able to get a fine overview of the current brisk research activities on spatial hearing in Japan.

I would like to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude for proper comments and helpful suggestions from all the referees who contributed their time and expertise in the preparation of this special issue. Also I would like to deeply thank Prof. Morimoto, Dr. Iida and Dr. Hirahara as well as the former Editor in Chief of the Society, Prof. Hideki Tachibana for their support from the very beginning of its planning stage. Finally, I deeply appreciate for the invaluable and disinterested contribution of the associate editor, Prof. Ozawa. Without his efforts including very strict time keeping, this special issue must have been much thinner.