

Lost sounds of the past brought to life (w/ Video, Audio)

August 31 2009



An audience experiences “the sonic scenario of the past.” Image courtesy Luca Petrella

Salpinx, barbiton, aulos, syrinx. Never heard them? Never heard of them? Neither had anyone else, for centuries. Until now.

These were all musical instruments, familiar to ancient civilizations but long since forgotten.

Ancient instruments can be lost because they are too difficult to build, or too difficult to play, but they can be heard again thanks to the ASTRA (Ancient instruments Sound/Timbre Reconstruction Application) team. These researchers accomplish this feat using computer modeling and grid technology - the shared resources of a distributed network of hundreds of computers.

Having successfully reconstructed the sound of an earlier [instrument](#) called the “epigonion,” ASTRA is working on a whole host of other lost instruments including the salpinx (a kind of ancient trumpet), the barbiton (an ancient base guitar), the aulos (an ancient oboe) and the syrinx (a pan flute).

More ancient instruments are to be heard soon, after the organization’s official Lost Sounds Orchestra finishes its preparations for a unique performance towards the end of summer.

In many respects, ASTRA’s Lost Sounds Orchestra is like any other orchestra — with real musicians, rehearsals and performances — except its goal is to offer its audience a completely new world of [music](#). The sounds of the barbiton and the salpinx are currently being finalized, while a guitar player is familiarizing himself with both the epigonion and the barbiton using his specially adapted electric MIDI guitar, which has been programmed with the lost sounds. The sounds of even more instruments, such as an ancient lower Mediterranean frame drum, should also be completed by the end of summer.

More information: www.lostsoundsorchestra.org/

Source: Enabling Grids for E-scienceE (EGEE)

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