



SPACE

Why You Might Sound Like a Smurf on Venus

Ever wondered what natural sounds you would hear on another planet? Although some spacecraft have carried microphones, sound has never been reliably recorded in an alien atmosphere. But now, thanks to simulations created by [Tim Leighton](#) from the University of Southampton, UK, and his team, you can hear what Mars and Venus would sound like.

In this video, you can listen to the recreated sound of a waterfall, thunder and a human voice on different planets and on Titan. Leighton used physics models to produce the sound of thunder and waterfalls in the different atmospheres, whereas the voice was morphed from recordings. "On Venus, the atmosphere is thick and soupy so vocal chords that would flutter lightly on Earth would vibrate more slowly," says Leighton. "As a result, the pitch of your voice drops."

In addition to changing the speed of moving vocal chords, different atmospheres affect the speed of sound itself. On Venus, sound travels faster, resulting in echoes moving quickly through a person's windpipe. This could confuse a listener, making it seem like the person has a short windpipe and therefore is small. "You would sound like a bass Smurf," says Leighton.

BY SANDRINE CEURSTEMONT...

APR 4, 2012 5:00 PM

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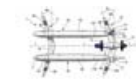
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The sounds will be heard publicly for the first time tonight as part of a show at the [Intech planetarium](#) in Winchester, UK. But simulating sounds on other planets could have applications beyond entertainment.

Using the same models, engineers could predict how vanes and struts on probes might vibrate or become fatigued during a mission. The simulations could also be used to design acoustic instruments calibrated to a specific planet's atmosphere.

If you enjoyed this post, check out the [sound of a solar storm](#) or listen to [simulations of fire](#).

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Dynastius

04 Apr 2012 11:52 PM ↗

The most interesting thing I found about this was that we haven't been able to reliably record audio from another world. What the hell? We can fly probes to another planet, land, do all kinds of complicated analysis and we can take great photos and some video, but we can't manage to do simple audio???

Edited by Dynastius at 04/04/12 11:53 PM



giantnerd @Dynastius

I assume its a matter of we could, but we haven't. When every gram costs per launch, cool but not scientifically necessary stuff gets ditched.



Dynastius @giantnerd

Well, they said some spacecraft have included microphones though....and a digital mic weighs almost nothing. So that's the part that got me. We already included mics but somehow have no audio to show for it.



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