PHY 103: Standing Waves in an Air Column

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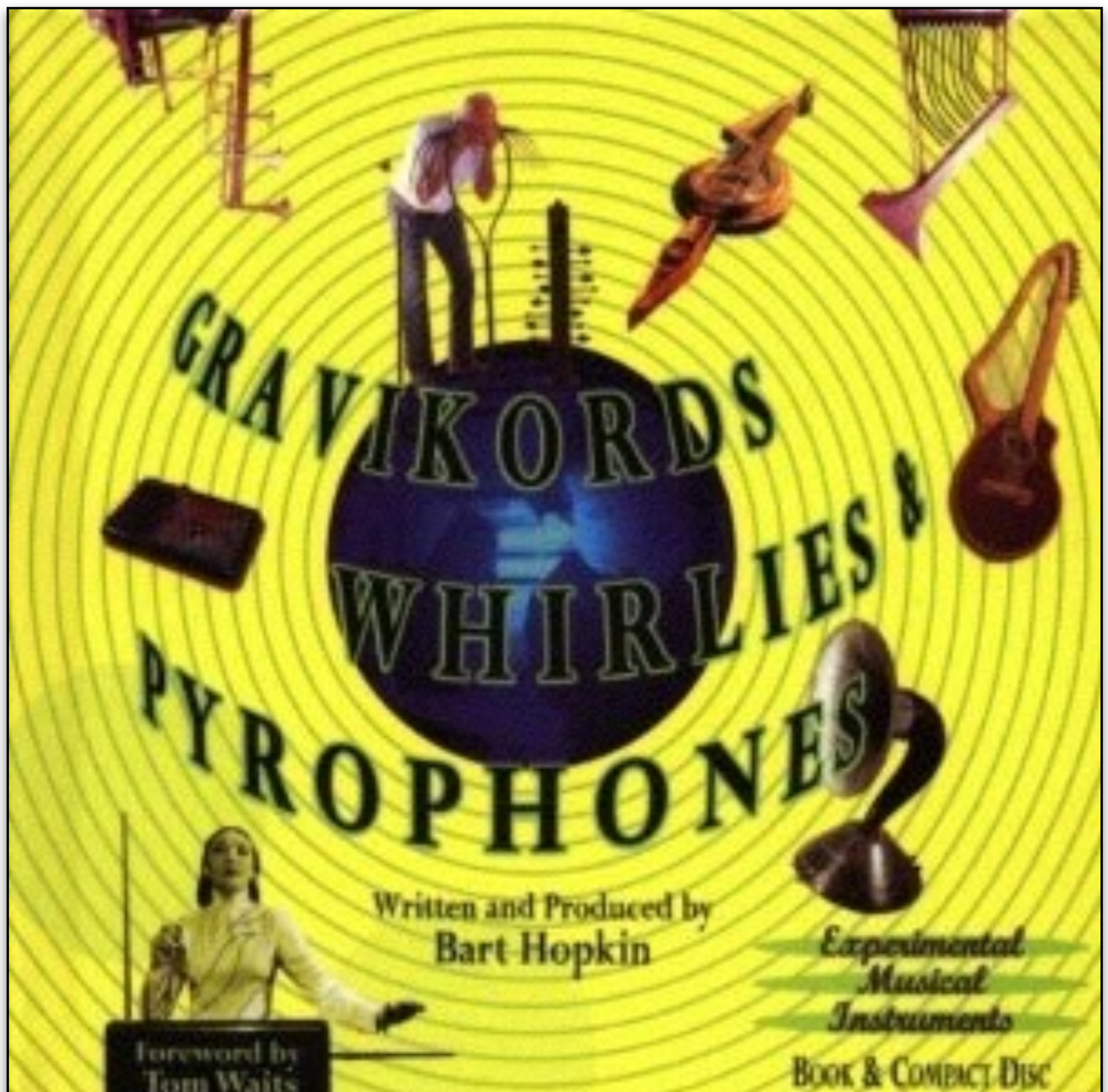
Last Time…

- The partials present in a complex tone contribute to the timbre of the sound. Partials can be *harmonic* (ideal integer multiples of the fundamental frequency) or *inharmonic*
- High-frequency components affect the brightness of a sound
- Fourier's Theorem: any reasonably continuous periodic function can be expressed in terms of a sum of sinusoidal functions
- Spectrograms plot the square modulus of the Fourier coefficients vs. time (power spectrum)
- Sampling and the Nyquist Limit: a waveform sampled at rate f_s can be reconstructed up to frequency $f_s/2$

Song of the Day

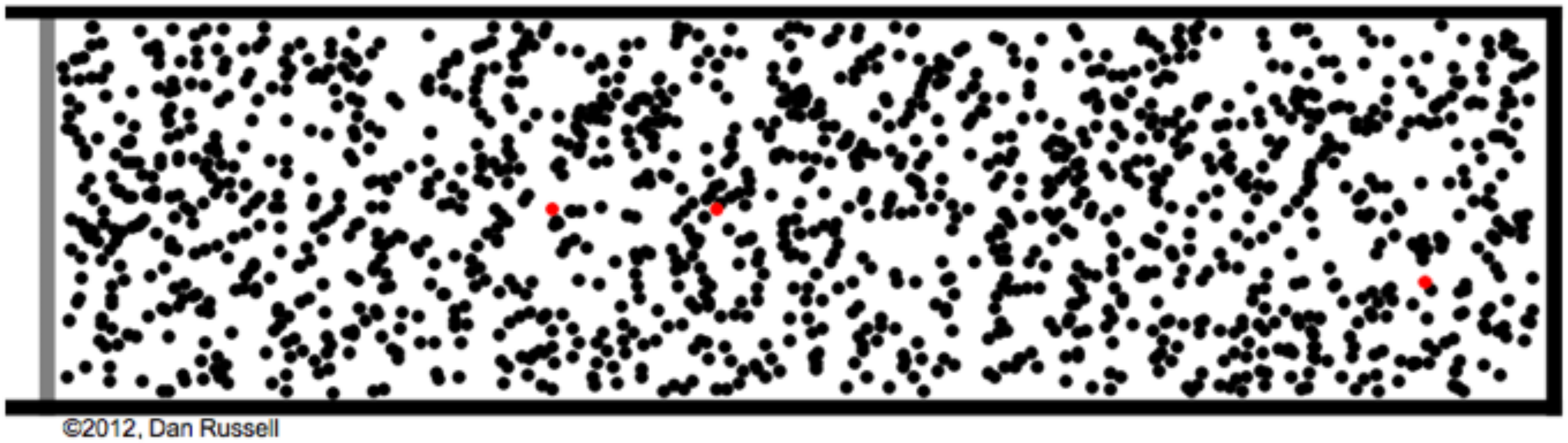
- How is this produced? (google Sarah Hopkins)

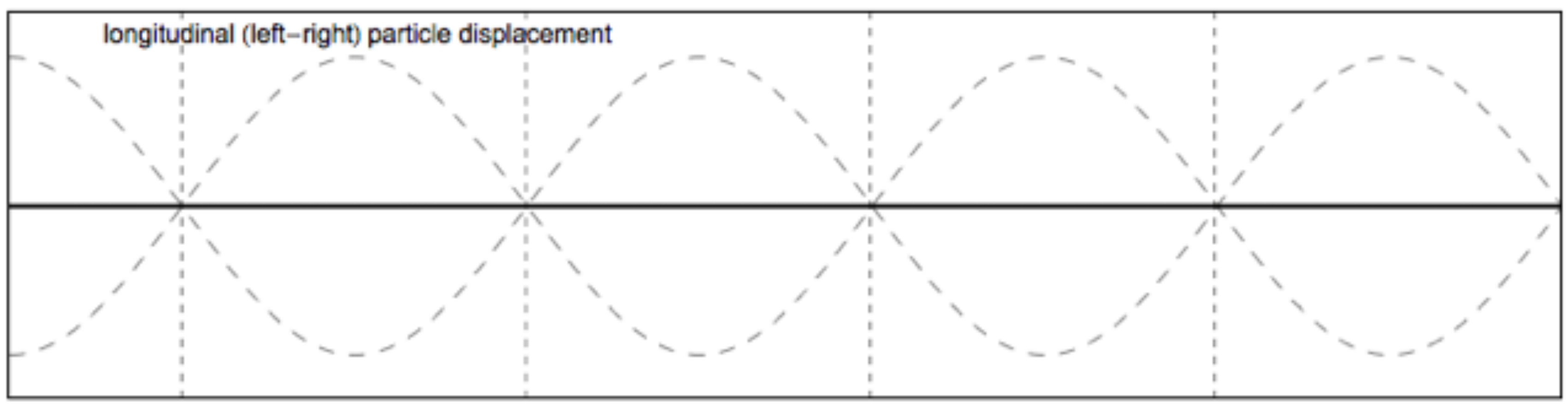


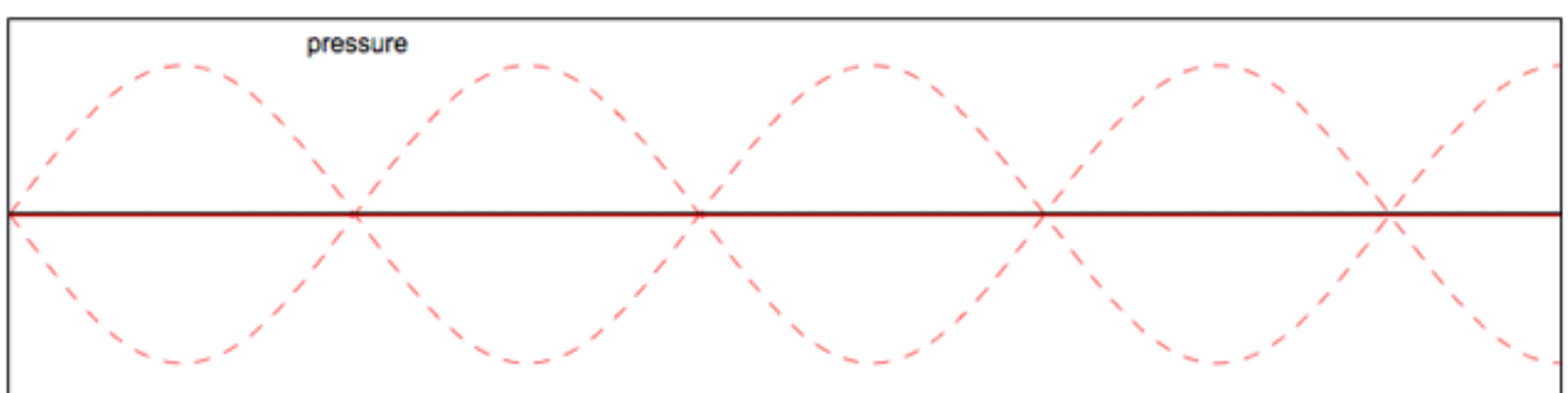
Waves in an Air Column

- Today we'll talk about standing waves in a column of air
- This is quite analogous to the topic of standing waves on a string, which we covered in detail already
- However, your intuition has to change a bit:
  - The string supported transverse waves
  - An air column supports longitudinal waves

Waves in an Air Column

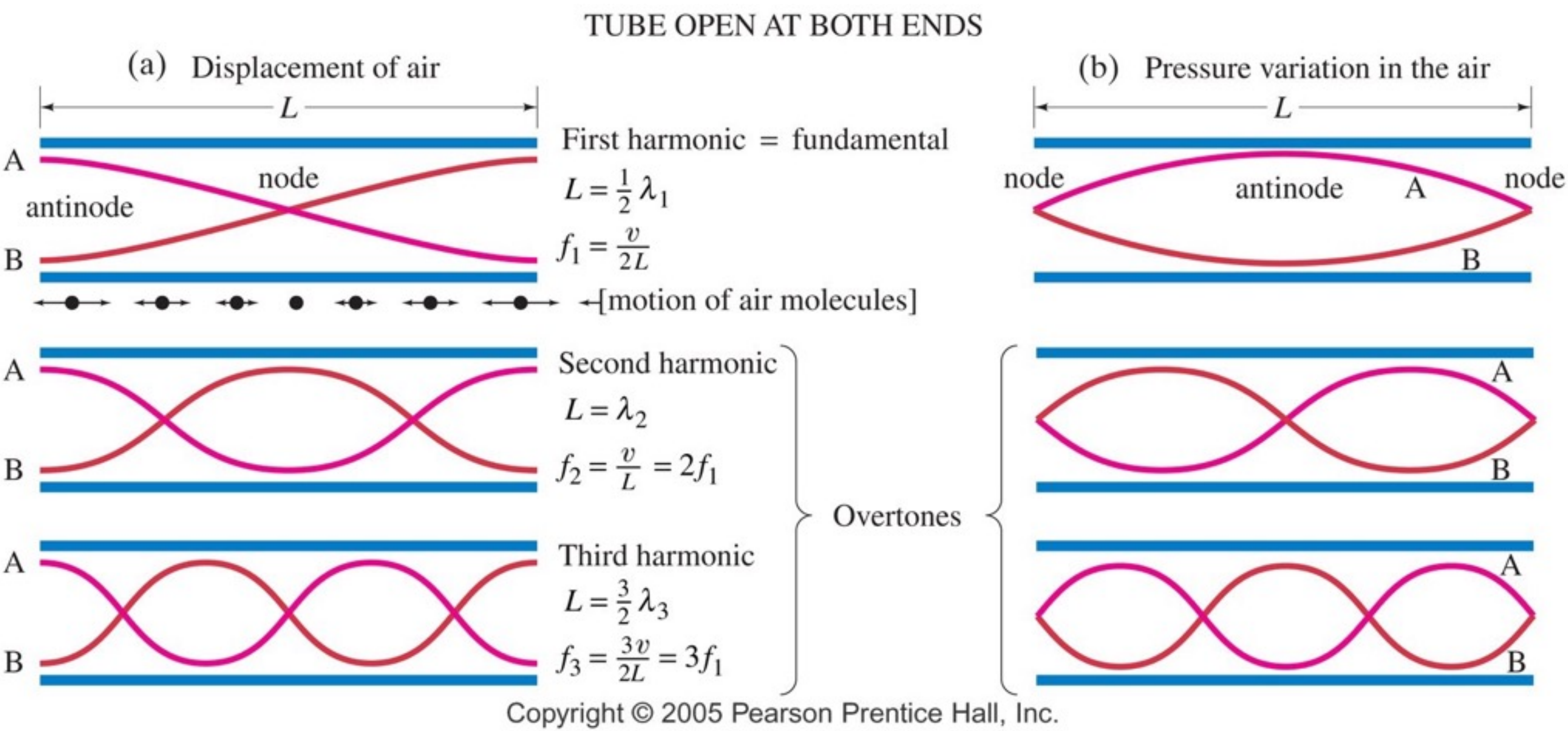






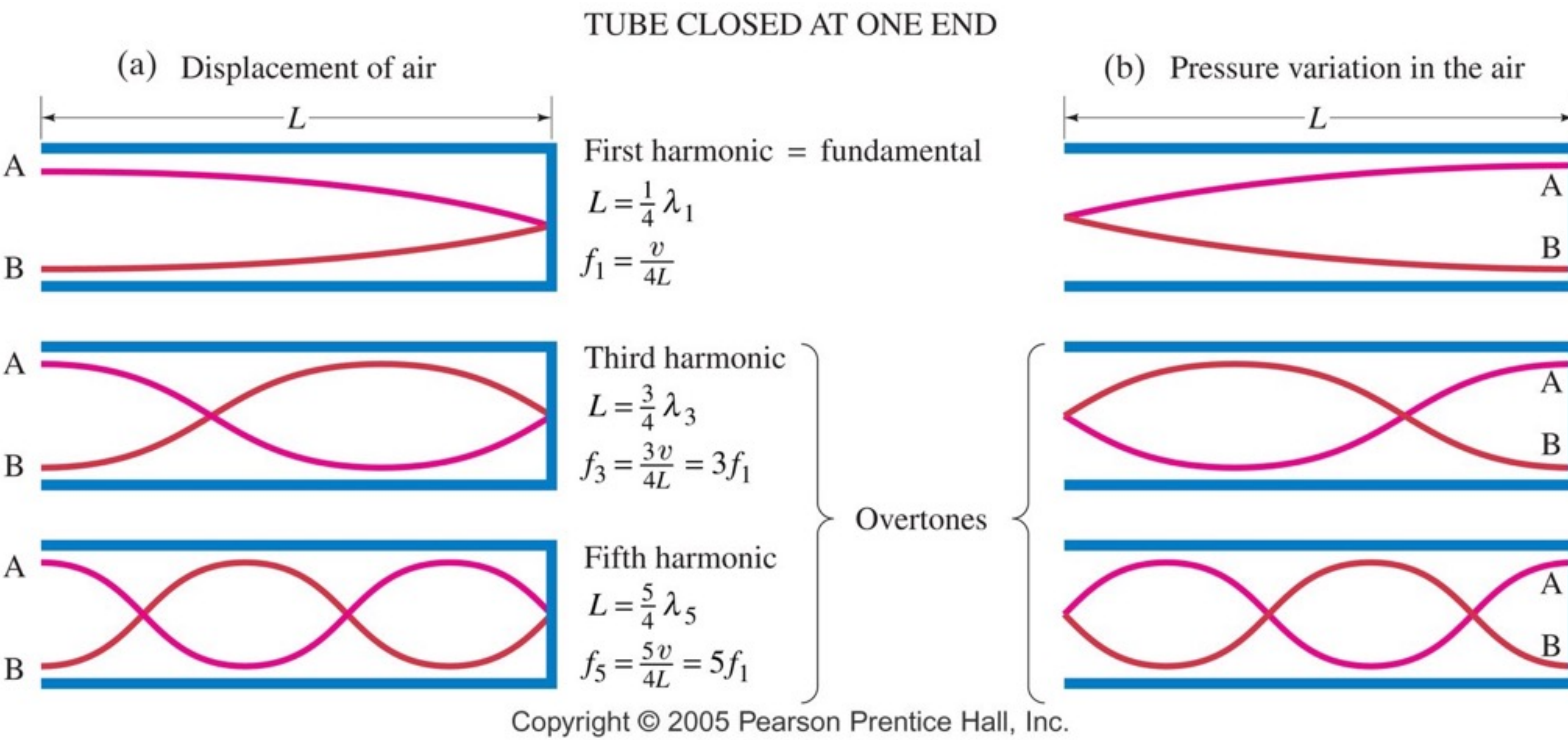
Displacement and Pressure

- Open tube (e.g., a flute) supports these waves:



Displacement and Pressure

- A closed tube (e.g., a clarinet) supports these waves:

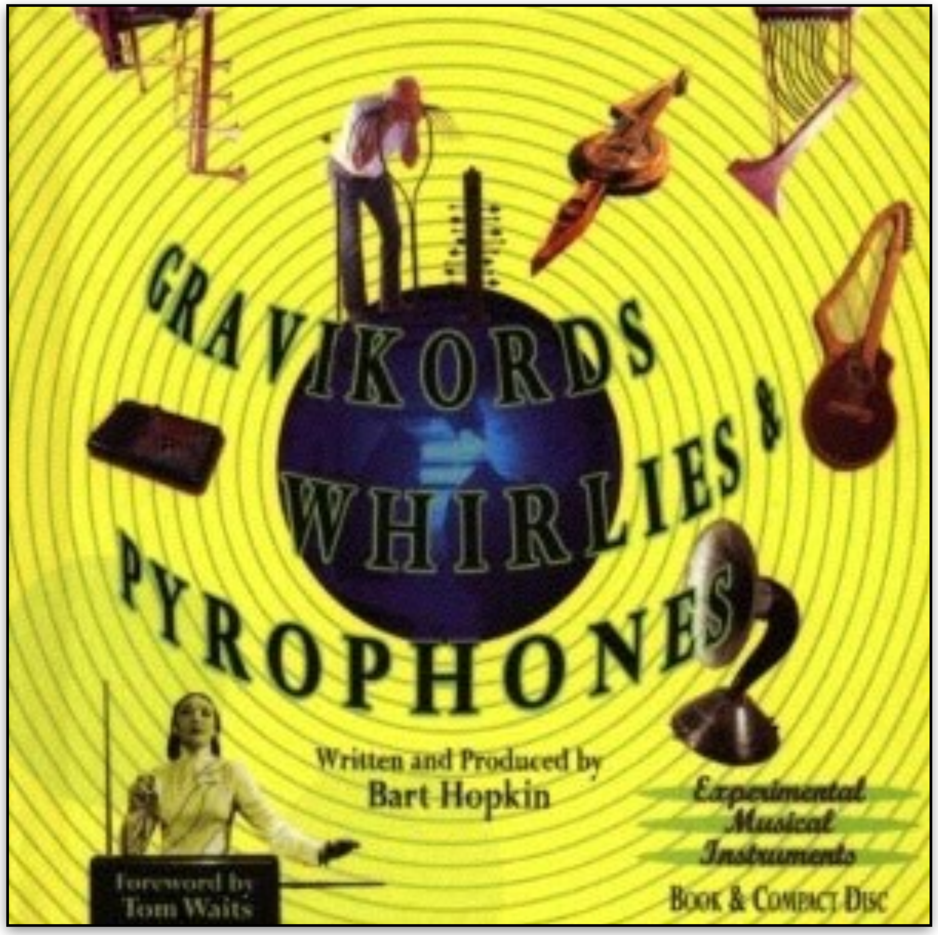


Harmonics/Overtones

- The closed tube (clarinet) only supports odd harmonics: f, $3f$, $5f$, …
- The open tube (flute, pipe organ) supports all integer harmonics: f, $2f$, $3f$, $4f$, $5f$, …
- The tubes may be the same but the boundary conditions vary
  - Closed end: allows high pressure but no motion
  - Open end: allows high motion but no changes in pressure to match exterior pressure

Music from Pipe Overtones

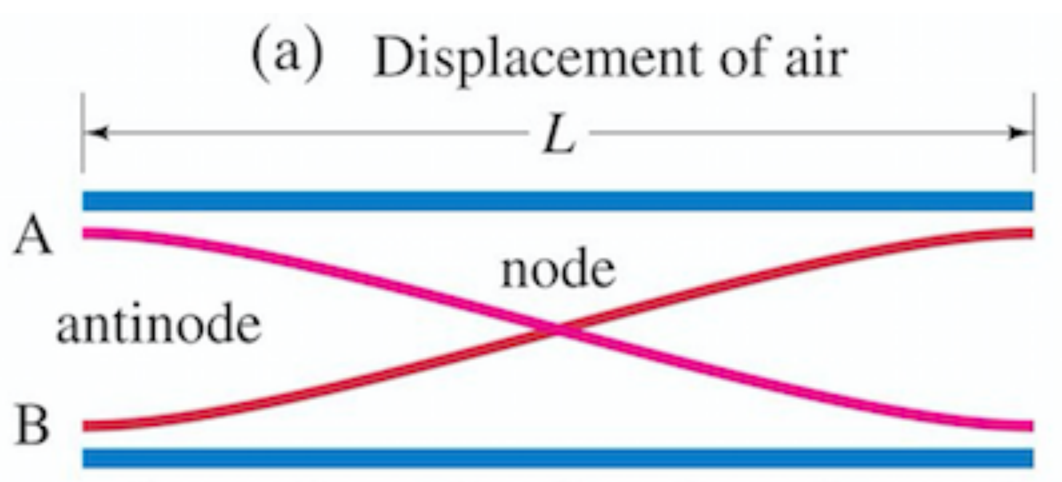
- The "whirlies" in this album are played by exciting the overtones of one or two pipes simultaneously

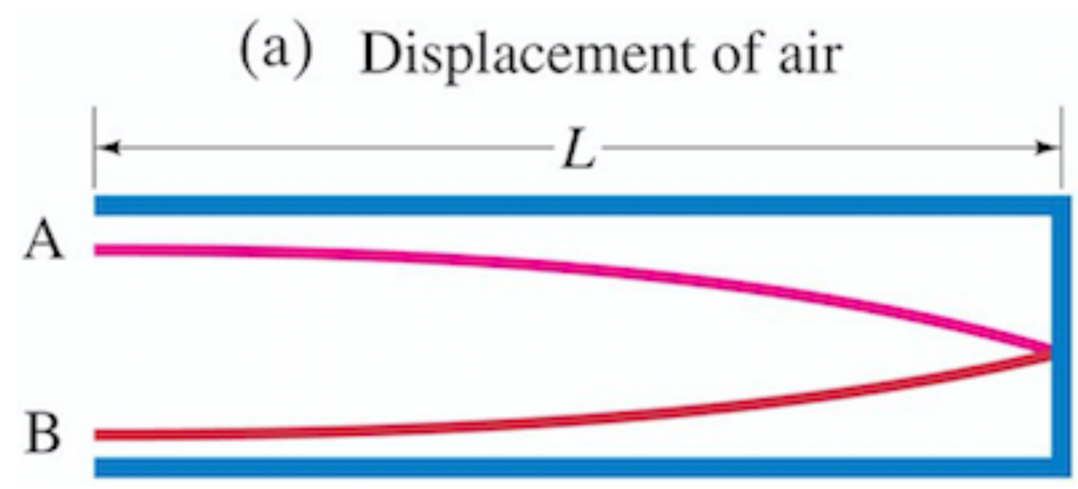


- Spin the pipe faster and you raise the pitch

Fundamental Tones

- Which has the lower fundamental tone? An tube open on both ends or a tube with one closed end?



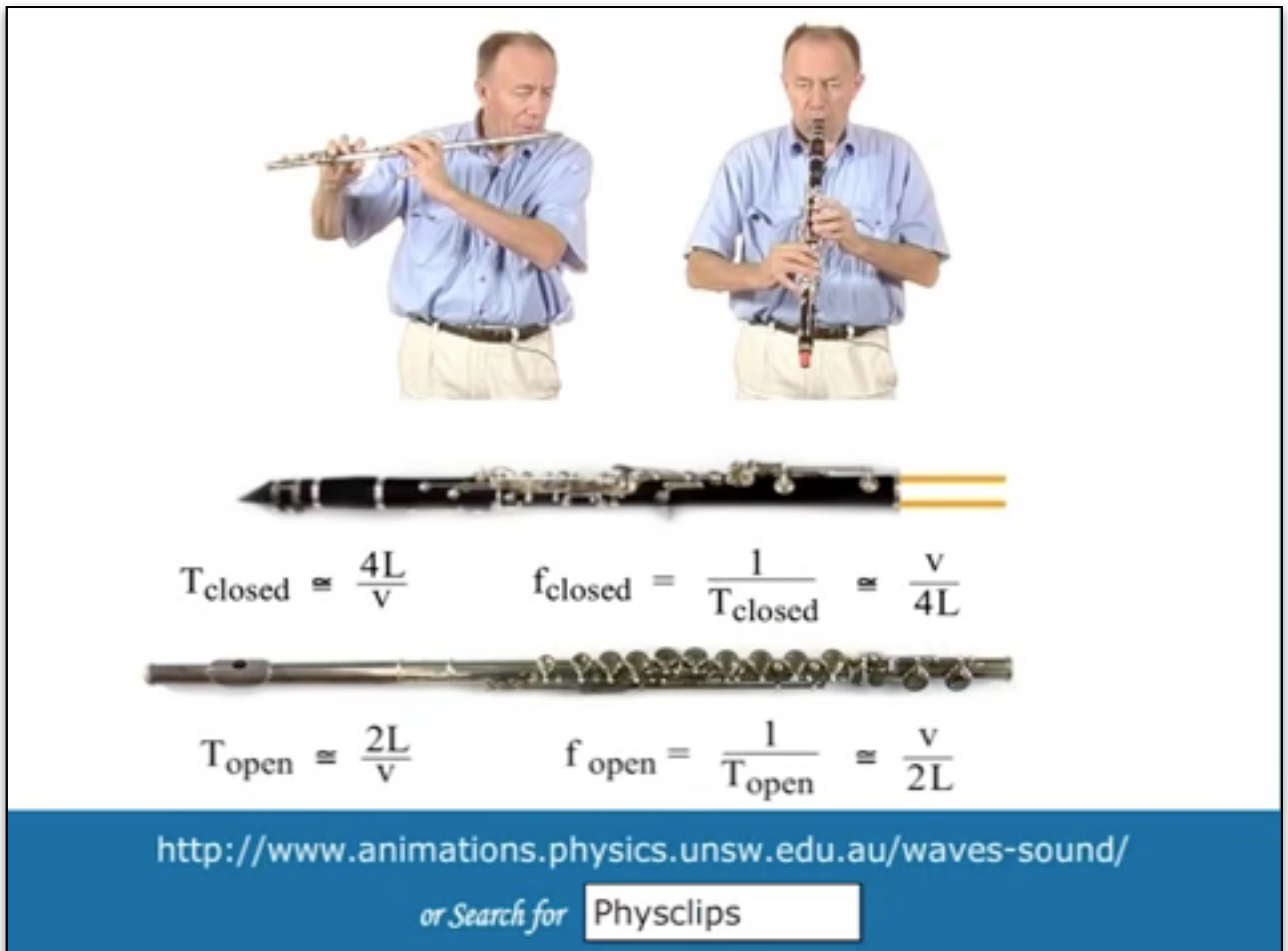


- Really nice demo of clarinet and flute with switched mouthpieces at UNSW
- http://newt.phys.unsw.edu.au/jw/flutes.v.clarinets.html

Clarinet vs. Flute

Clarinet vs. Flute

- Note the difference in the fundamental tones and the harmonics supported



Open/Closed Ends

- Effectively a tube closed one one end:
  - Reed instruments
  - Horns
  - Didgeridoo
  - Panflute (depends on construction)

- Effectively a tube of air open on both ends:
  - Flutes
  - Organ pipes
  - Recorders and whistles

Speed of Sound in Air

- Recall the speed of waves on a string:

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{F_T}{\rho}}$$

- We can guesstimate an equivalent for air
  - Energy of air molecules: $E \sim k_B T$
  - Kinetic energy goes like $E \sim mv^2$
  - Equate the energy and solve for v:

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{k_B T}{m}}$$

Speed of Sound in Air

- Plug in some numbers:

$$M_{1\ \mathrm{mol}} = \rho_{\mathrm{air}} \cdot V_{1\ \mathrm{mol}} = 1.2754\ \mathrm{kg/m^{-3}} \cdot 22.4\ \mathrm{L}$$
$$= 0.02857\ \mathrm{kg}$$

$$m = \frac{M}{N_A} = \frac{0.02857\ \mathrm{kg}}{6.022 \cdot 10^{23}} = 4.74 \cdot 10^{-26}\ \mathrm{kg}$$

$$v = \sqrt{\frac{k_B T}{m}} = \sqrt{\frac{1.38 \cdot 10^{-23}\ \mathrm{J/K} \times 293\ \mathrm{K}}{4.74 \cdot 10^{-26}}} \approx 300\ \mathrm{m/s}$$

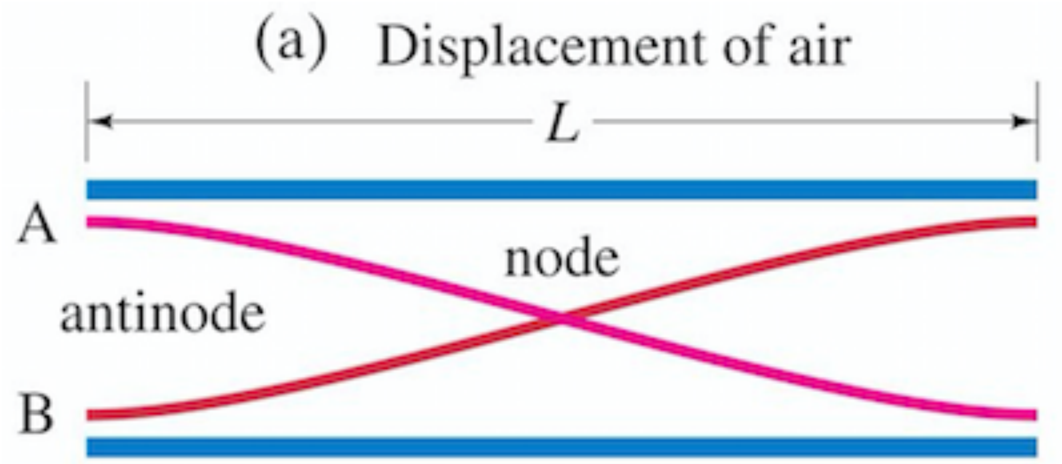
- Not bad! The real number is given by the Newton-Laplace formula:

$$v = \sqrt{\gamma \cdot \frac{k_B T}{m}},\ \text{where } \gamma = 1.4 \Rightarrow v \approx 343\ \mathrm{m/s}$$

Frequency of Open Pipe

- The fundamental frequency of an open-open pipe is

$$f = v/2L$$



- At 20 C, v=343 m/s, so for a 1 meter open pipe

$$f \approx (343 \text{ m/s})/(2 \cdot 1 \text{ m})$$
$$= 171.5 \text{ Hz}$$

Frequency of Closed Pipe

- The fundamental frequency of an closed pipe is

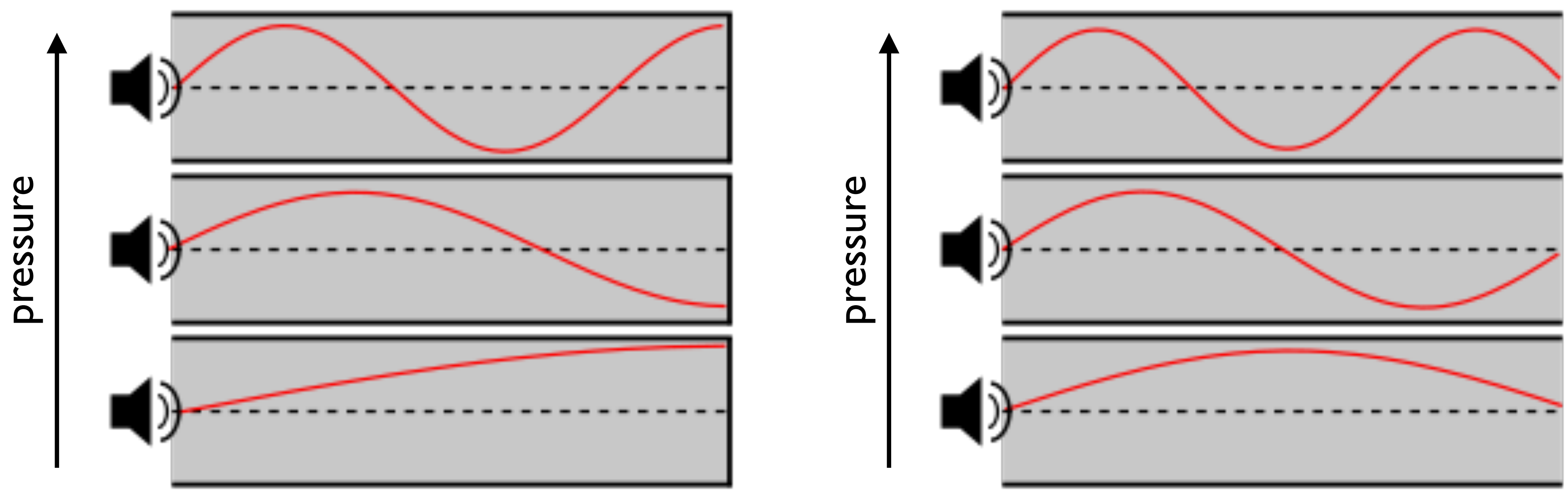
$$f = v / 4L$$

- At 20 C, v=343 m/s, so for a 1 meter closed pipe

$$f \approx (343 \text{ m/s}) / (4 \cdot 1 \text{ m})$$
$$= 85.75 \text{ Hz}$$

Acoustic Resonance

- If a system is driven at one of its natural vibrational frequencies, or normal modes, it will amplify the input
- Example: using a speaker to drive air in a pipe



- Correctly timed excitations cause the mode to grow

Reflections at Endpoints

- Waves reflecting off open or closed boundaries:

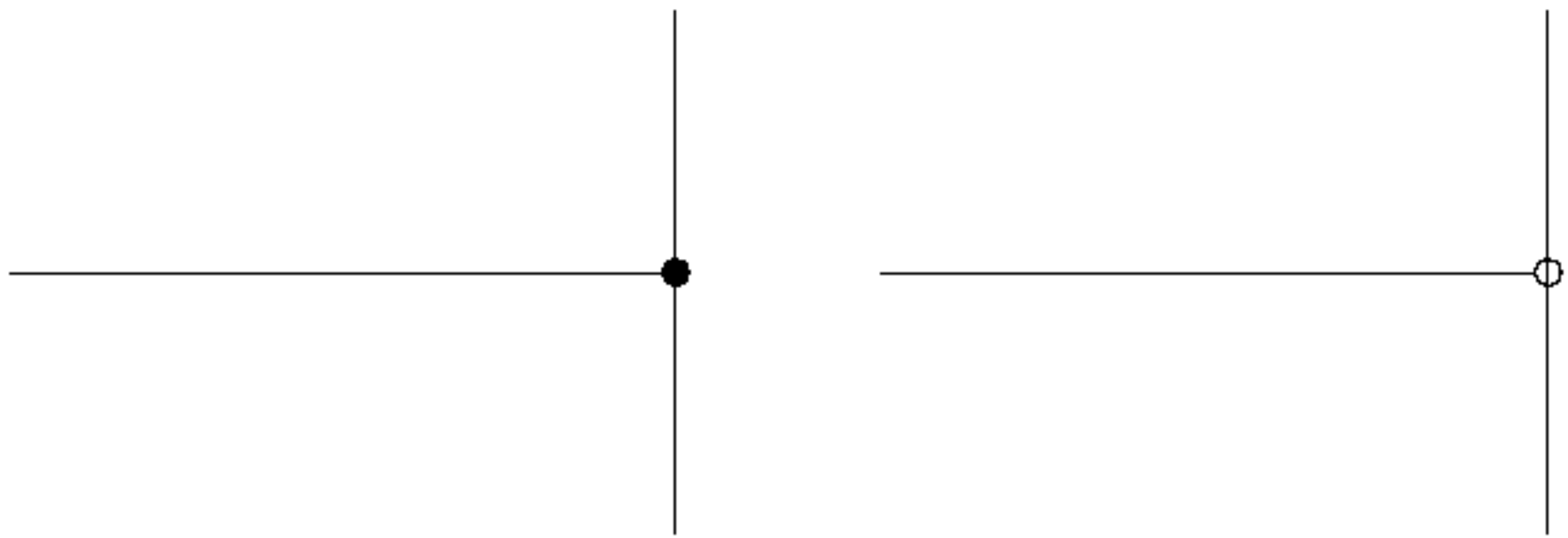


Image courtesy of Dan Russell, Graduate Program in Acoustics, PSU

- At a closed boundary, the wave will be phase shifted by 180 degrees

Reflections at Boundaries

- Sign of the wave depends on the nature of the boundary
- If the sign is the opposite or the same at both boundaries then two reflections are needed to recover the original wave
- If the sign is opposite on one side and the same on the other then four reflections are needed

End Correction for Pipe

- Reflections of sound waves on a real pipe do not occur exactly at the physical boundary, but slightly beyond it
- In other words, the pipe's acoustic length is slightly longer than its physical length by an amount **Δ***L*=0.8*d* (open pipe), where *d* is the diameter of the pipe
- As a result, the frequencies of the closed and open pipes are

$$f_{\text{open}} = \frac{nv}{2(L+0.8d)} \qquad f_{\text{closed}} = \frac{nv}{4(L+0.4d)}$$

Summary

- Normal modes of open/closed pipes:
  - Half-wavelength fundamental in open pipes
  - Quarter-wavelength fundamental in closed pipes
  - Longitudinal pressure and displacement waves
- Resonances: particular input frequencies where a pipe (or any acoustic system) results in amplification
- Boundary conditions: reflections which affect acoustic behavior such as resonances
  - Correspondence bet. physical and acoustic lengths may not be exact, requiring edge corrections

Fipple Flute

- Air from the source oscillates back and forth across the knife edge by the motion of the standing wave inside the air column