

Arsenii Avraamov, "The rebirth of music. The 'Thereminvox'," *Rabis* no. 23 (1927): 8.

Our press has responded in dry, stingy, and... dull fashion to a major event of the current musical season—the demonstration by Rosfil of the amazing invention of the young Soviet engineer L. S. Termen. True, it is not an absolute 'novelty'—in Moscow a couple of years ago Termen already demonstrated his musical 'machine' in the first, embryonic version. It is also true that a whole series of scientists and technicians since then have been working on analogous (or close in concept) technical tasks in Moscow and Leningrad. But only Termen has managed in recent years to carry his invention through to a level of artistic musical significance that let us qualify it as a 'lecture concert', as a major *musical* event of our day.

The perspectives opened to music by Termen's invention are truly limitless. His 'Thereminvox' is not simply a 'new musical instrument,' as our musical critics think. No, *it is the solution of an enormous social scientific artistic problem*, it is the first gigantic step into the future, into our future. It is a *social revolution* in musical art, its renaissance.

All this 'mushrooming' growth about which Leonid Sabaneev so pointedly and maliciously informed us recently in these pages in his regular 'letter from Paris' (No. 18, pp. 14-15) is of course a natural product of the *decay* of the upper layer of the cultural 'soil' of Europe. It is that 'luxuriant moss grown up around a rotting stump' about which we have long been hearing from the mouth of Romain Rolland, neither a Lef man nor a Communist.

Termen's work is the first solid *mine* under the old musical world and simultaneously one of the foundation stones of the coming new order.

"This will be more than just the primitive artisanal 'symphony of sirens!..'."

Complete freedom of timbre and intonational nuances will lead to

- a) expansion of the European tonal system, which has driven contemporary music into the dead end described above,
- b) union with the magnificent art of the East, heretofore unrealizable thanks to the grip of the 12-note system of well-tempered tuning,
- c) unprecedentedly profound synthesis with the art of the word, for speech intonations and timbres are encompassed by the diapason of the 'Thereminvox', and, finally,
- d) creation of a completely new, unheard-of 'differential music' (Differenz-Musik), of magnificent harmonic 'glissando' in parallel and counter motion, not to mention the enrichment of means even within the bounds of present forms.

The brevity and precision of the electronic apparatus finally permits us to approach directly the problem of the 'multiplication' of music, its *automatization*, without unavoidably lowering 'the quality of the artistic product' thereby. This is the only real opportunity for genuine 'democratization' of musical art.

I have purposely lingered only on the *social* musical problem, in order to emphasize the insufficient keenness of our musical criticism in terms of mass audience: chasing after a 'Marxist approach' to music on any 'less than pin-headed' grounds, essentially crucifying itself for 'Ivan the Soldier' and... Beethoven, it (criticism) has contrived to pass by—'without noticing'—the kind of elephant that is the performance of L. S. Termen.