

EVGENY HENKIN AND THE THEREMIN: 1928-1934

Dr Sean Albiez | 28th March 2026 [Update 2]

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EVGENY HENKIN: From January 1928, I began to learn to play the theremin. On September 15, 1928, I began to work on this instrument. I gave concerts in many cities in Germany, I was in Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Austria, Luxembourg, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay. In addition, I travelled in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia.

QUESTION: In what year did you stop working on the theremin?

EVGENY HENKIN: At the end of 1934.

QUESTION: Why did you have to stop working on the theremin?

EVGENY HENKIN: The "Union of German Artists" did not give me permission to continue theremin concert performances, as a non-Aryan.

From the Soviet authorities investigation into Evgeny Henkin on his return to the USSR

Over the last few years I have been researching the history of the Theremin and associated 'aether-wave' instruments in the pre-WWII period in Europe. In previous histories (e.g. Albert Glinzky's (2005) *Theremin: Ether Music and Espionage* and Andrey Smirnov's (2013) *Sound in Z: Experiments in Sound and Electronic Music in Early 20th Century Russia*) little attention has been paid to what happened in the European context after Leon Theremin left for the USA in December 1927. This article provides a summary of events in this period in Berlin, elsewhere in Europe, and in South America, with a particular focus on those directly related to Evgeny Henkin. The information has been discovered by researching digital newspaper archives from across Europe, South America and the USA. It is likely that further information will become available in the future as digital archive collections are continually expanded. Between November 1928 and late 1934 Henkin probably performed in concerts as yet undocumented and not included here, and the search goes on. However, what has been discovered so far supports Henkin's claims concerning his artistic life as a musician in Germany, in other European contexts and in South America. After July 1930 details of Henkin's activities become sparse, but they do include some important contributions to the understanding of the development of electronic music performance at key historical moments and locations.

When Leon Theremin left Europe in late 1927, developmental activities at his Berlin laboratory continued until 1930, global patents administration involved the Berlin company M. J. Goldberg & Sohne G.m.b.H. until its final demise in 1934, and in early 1928 the *Schule der elektrischen Musik* (School of Electrical Music) was established where students received training in performing on Theremin's 'aetherwellen' instrument. Later in the year, a Theremin Trio format was established whereby students from the school would appear at

concert events that combined lectures, performances and opportunities for audience participation. The trio, also at times known as the *Original Prof. Theremin Trio* and the *Theremin Ensemble* who performed *Aetherwellen-Musik* or *Musik aus der Luft*, had a number of members trained in Berlin from 1928 – 1930, and consisted of 2 Theremin performers and an accompanying pianist. It is clear that the aim of these concerts was to provide both entertainment and information, and from the beginning to commercially raise awareness of the Theremin, with the intention of developing a market for a domestic version of the instrument. It is important to emphasise that in Germany it was a Theremin instrument with a single antenna to control pitch, a foot pedal to control volume and an interruptor switch to allow staccato pitch manipulation that was deployed, rather than Leon Theremin's preferred two antenna model. While Leon Theremin focused his promotional and commercial efforts in the USA in this period, with the RCA Victor Theremin being marketed from 1929-1930, his employees or collaborators in Berlin acted in a similar way in promoting the Theremin instrument in Europe.

1928

Evgeny Henkin, according to the testimony quoted at the beginning of this article, studied at the Berlin School of Electrical Music, and began to perform on the instrument from **15th September 1928**. Writing in November 1928 Swiss technology and music writer Arno Huth, who had visited the Berlin Theremin laboratory, provided some clarity as to the timeline of Henkin's involvement with the Theremin:

While [Leon] Theremin in America works with extreme energy to perfect his instruments, his assistants in the Berlin laboratory are constantly trying to make numerous small improvements to the main apparatus ... Attached to the laboratory is the "School of Electrical Music" under the artistic musical direction of Prof. Lewin. The students – both young and old musicians - will carry Theremin ideas into the world and form the first electric orchestra in the shortest possible time. The playing technique is so surprisingly easy to learn that the students can play more difficult duos after just four months, and after just four months of apprenticeship, a student couple has formed a first theremin trio with a pianist, which is currently on concert tours. [*Neue Wege zur elektrischen Musik, Signal für die Musikalische Welt, 21-11-28, no. 47*]

This student couple were most likely Evgeny Henkin and Kristy Tsharikoff, with School Director Michael Lewin accompanying them on piano. This indicates that they had 4 months tuition from approximately May until September 1928, before performing in Copenhagen.

From the **15th - 23rd September** the first 8 Theremin Trio concerts took place at **Copenhagen's Tivoli Concert Hall** as part of a radio and tourism exhibition. The *Aarhuus Stifts-Tidende* (16-9-28, p.9) specifically mentions Henkin in an article on the Copenhagen Tivoli concerts. In the Finnish newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* (24-9-28, p.4)¹ the performances are described effusively:

[The Theremin Trio] conjured up songs and melodies from the first act duet of "Eugene Onegin" to "The Song of the Primes" with their hands alone, all with tremendous technique and skill. And the music was indeed supernaturally sonorous

and beautiful, a great step into the adventurous world of technology, where art, and perhaps music, will find new expressions and paths. And at the same time this new music seemed wonderfully moving.

The Danish language US newspaper *Den Danske Pioneer* (Nebraska) (18-10-28) names 'Henkin og Tjarikof' as the performers and described how

the Russians each stood by a small metal rod, and by moving their hand back and forth near it, they drew the most wonderful tones and strange sounds out of the air ... The Russians therefore played as if on an invisible violin. However, the tones were not those of the violin, rather they were cello tones, which often rose to a glassy lustre and purity like that which emanates from a choir of boys' voices.

In September 1928, Theremin-Trio concerts were simultaneously taking place in Germany, suggesting even at the beginning, 2 versions of the Theremin Trio were active. A trio of **Alfred Nielsen, Willy Helman and Leo Leur (Piano)** performed in Germany at the following concerts:

- **20th September – Nibelungensaal in Mannheim**

A review in the *Neue Mannheimer Zeitung* (21-9-28, p.3) mentions Helman, Nielsen and Leur as the pianist:

One apparatus, tuned lower, howls a little and is very muffled ... But from these prairie noises you soon hear familiar sounds. Leoncavallo's fragrant "Mattinata" shows that the player, Mr. Nielsen, has taken the free movement of his hands somewhat too much to heart musically in terms of intonation and phrasing.

The colleague opposite with the higher pitched instrument, Mr. Helmann, seemed to us to be the musically most talented. His performance of Saint-Saëns' "The Dying Swan" was Pavlova in the air. A song performance was also delightful. The sweet tone, between violin and vibrating female voice, has to be content with so-called salon music until there are original compositions for this instrument.

The pianist, Kapellmeister Leux (sic.), deserves to be mentioned because of his full attack and the sensitive accompaniment of the songs of the air.

- **22nd September – Grosse Halle (Pressagelände) in Köln**

The *Kolnische Zeitung* (24-9-28, p.2) identifies Helman, Nielsen and Leur as the performers.

After Copenhagen, Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin **travelled to Sweden** and performed in the following concerts;

- **24th, 27th & 30th September - Auditorium in Stockholm**
- **29th September - Lund** (venue unknown)

- **4th October - Realskolan Auditorium in Malmö**

In the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* (23-9-28) the programme for the first Stockholm concert was outlined as follows. The evening's events consisted of a

Lecture on "New Paths for the Art of Music" followed by [performances of] *Melody* (Denza), *Poème* (Fibisch), *Ave Maria* (Schubert), *Barcarolle* from the opera *Tales of Hoffman* (Offenbach), the famous Russian "*Volga Song*", [the Tatiana and Olga] *Duet* from the opera *Eugin Onegin* (Tchaikovsky), Toselli's *Serenade*, *Widmung* (Schumann), *Elegi* (Glinka), *Romanze* (Rubinstein), the Hindu Song from the opera *Sadko* (Rimsky-Korsakoff) and *Extase* (Louis Ganne). The various musical numbers are performed partly in the form of a trio for two Theremin instruments of different timbres and piano, partly as a solo with piano accompaniment.

A review of the first Swedish concert in the *Svenska Dagbladet* (25-9-28) described the sound of the 'sfärernas musik' [music of the spheres] as ranging from the doomed pathos of the trombone to the wailing and joy of the human voice, and some of the magic of the violin's timbre. However, it found the inescapable glissando and sliding pitches, and the incessant vibrato in the performances too sentimental. Nevertheless, the newspaper suggested the audience in the packed auditorium were amused and captivated, and were given the opportunity to try the instrument. Hyltén-Cavallius (2013) in discussing a number of Theremin Trio concerts in Sweden wrote that

One critic admitted that the instrument produced a lovely sound, but that the two gentlemen Tcharikoff (sic.) and Henkin demonstrating the instrument that evening played with such endless tremolo that it more reminded him of 'music from Hawaiian lovesick cats' (Teater- och musiknytt in *Svenska Dagbladet* 1928).

As such it is clear that Henkin did perform in Sweden in September/October 1928, and he is also mentioned in the Swedish newspapers *Aftonbladet*, *Arbetet*, *Dagens Nyheter* and the *Svenska Dagbladet* several times between 25th September and 3rd of October. The *Arbetet* (4-10-28) newspaper reported that '[a]t 8 o'clock tonight, a Theremin evening takes place at the Realskolan auditorium.'

Following these Danish and Swedish concerts, other Theremin Trio performances subsequently took place in 1928 with the two identified line-ups of Theremin School students. Henkin performed on the Theremin alongside Tsharikoff, with Lewin on piano, at a number of the following concerts, some of which specifically name Henkin in press coverage.

- **1st October - 28th October – Scala Theater in Berlin (residency)**

This was a 4-week residency at the Scala variety theatre – though it is unclear who performed in the Theremin Trio at these concerts as there are no details in newspaper advertisements, it is likely that Henkin was involved in at least some of them, though on 4th October it is likely he performed in Malmö with Tsharikoff and Lewin.

- **13th October - Stadthalle in Mulheim**

This concert that took place during the Scala residency potentially featured Henkin, but details are unclear. Henkin and Tscharikoff are named in a review in the *Rhein- und Ruhrzeitung* (15-10-28, p.4) that is not convinced by the tonal qualities of the instrument.



- **17th October – Scala Cinema, Berlin**

A special evening performance for the readers of the *Berliner Tageblatt and Handels-Zeitung* (16-10-28, p. 18)

- **23rd October - Thaliasaal in Halle**

The *Saale-Zeitung* (25-10-28, p.6) review names Henkin and Tscharikoff, with the pianist accompanist identified as Leo Taubmann⁺, and is quite critical of their performances. The review suggests there is a big difference between the tonal productions created from the Theremin apparatus by a musically cultivated artist as opposed to a naïve person untouched by art. The writer suggested that there was an audible difference between the 1927 performances of Leon Theremin and those of Henkin and Tscharikoff. Leon Theremin's performances were said to have been more perfect in terms of tonal beauty and purity according to a witness of the earlier concerts. However, Evgeny Henkin's rendition of Verdi's *Rigoletto* was performed twice at the request of the audience, and were warmly received overall, and Tscharikoff's performance of Rubinstein's *Romance* was also complimented.

- **15th November - Gleiwitz in Poland**

A one-off performance announced in the *Wirtschaftskorrespondenz für Polen* (10-10-28, p.4)



- 18th November - Breslau (venue unknown)

This concert definitely featured Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin as details are available in a theatre programme from the time.

- 25th November - Landestheater in Altenburg

This concert also featured Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin as – likewise - details are available in a theatre programme from the time.

- 29th November - Capitol Theatre in Jena

- **4th – 6th December - also at the Capitol Theatre in Jena** [probably Nielsen and Helmann]
- **5th December - Eintracht Theatre in Karlsruhe**

A review in the *Badischer Beobachter* (7-12-28, p.10) identified Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin as the performers at this event, and an anonymous critic remarked:

[O]n the basis of the pieces performed by the Theremin Trio, whose accompaniment was provided by a piano (Prof. Michael Lewin), one cannot deny that some of the notes are nevertheless highly agreeable and even aesthetically moving, and one must openly admit that these intonations, which are detached from any particular material sound and are therefore indeed "free-floating", present music with a wide variety of new possibilities. ... However, one condition will always have to be met: the players must be very sensitive musicians and must have a very sensitive ear. In this respect, there was always a noticeable difference in favour of Eugen Henkin (sic.), who outperformed his partner Kristidor Tschairikof (sic.) in both monophonic and two-part performances. The way he played the "Rigoletto" Fantasy, for example, was a musical experience, while some of the other parts remained more like a mechanical reproduction magnified by the loudspeaker. By the end of the event, the initial scepticism had given way to such increasing interest that many listeners eagerly took advantage of the opportunity offered to them to try their hand as an "air tone generator".

1929

In early 1929, Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin embarked on a tour of the Netherlands. The tour was extended during January with further concerts, and as a result this means details in the tour programme from the time are incorrect. It is important to acknowledge that contemporary newspaper accounts suggest that attendance at the concerts was often surprisingly low – this was sometimes the case in the Netherlands and for other German concerts. An attempt to clarify the events of this tour are as follows.

The Theremin Trio in the Netherlands – January 1929

On 4 January 1929, Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin gave a demonstration to the Dutch press at the Victoria Hotel in Amsterdam which subsequently garnered wide newspaper coverage. The newspaper *Voorwaarts* (5-1-29, p.1) reported that

[t]oday a small number of guests gathered in a room of the "Victoria Hotel" to enjoy a foretaste of the demonstration of "ether wave music", that the Theremin Trio, formed on the initiative of the inventor Prof. Theremin, will give on Saturday night in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and on Monday in the Building for Arts and Sciences in Rotterdam. ... We are dealing here with a completely new instrument, which cannot be compared with any existing ones. One can try to make comparisons

with a cello or a saxophone or a musical saw, but it remains something completely new.

The tour of the Netherlands then developed as follows.

- **5th January - Amsterdam [Concertgebouw Grote Zaal] - Henkin-Tscharikoff-Lewin**

N.V. INTERNATIONALE CONCERTDIRECTIE ERNST KRAUSS
Amsterdam, Marnixstraat 425, Tel. 35425

Zaterdag 5 Januari, 8.15 uur: Concertgebouw, groote Zaal.

CONCERT EN VOORDRACHT
Prof. Leo Theremin's Aethergolven-Muziek
gedemonstreerd op origineele Theremin-apparaten door 't Theremin-Trio
Eugen Henkin - Kristodor Tscharikoff - Prof. M. Lewin:
(Piano). Explicator: Dio Huysmans.

1. Voordracht „Nieuwe Perspectieven op het gebied der Muziek" door Dio Huysmans.		
2. Romance	Henkin en Tscharikoff.	Denza
3. Hindoe-lied uit de Opera „Sadko"	Henkin.	Rimsky-Korsakoff
4. Aria uit „Bohème"	Tscharikoff.	Puccini
5. Extase	Henkin en Tscharikoff.	Ganne
6. Wolga-lied	Henkin en Tscharikoff.	bew. door Lewin
7. Elegie	— P A U Z E —	Glinka
8. Romance	Henkin en Tscharikoff.	Rubinstein
9. Duet uit de Opera „Pique Dame"	Tscharikoff	Tschaikowski
10. Barcarolle uit „Hoffmanns Erzählungen"	Henkin en Tscharikoff	Offenbach
11. Fragment uit de Opera „Rigoletto"	Henkin en Tscharikoff.	Verdi
12. Wals uit het Ballet „Dornröschen"	Henkin	Tschaikowski
	Henkin en Tscharikoff	

BECHSTEIN-Concertvleugel van Kettner's Pianohandel,
Amsterdam - Utrecht - Hilversum - Arnhem - Enschede.

Amsterdam

In a *De Kunst* (12-1-29, p.114) magazine article, the writer N.H.W. in reflecting on the first Amsterdam concert wrote,

Prof. Lewin, who revealed himself in an interview as a very broadly developed, highly intelligent artist of a high rank, believes with absolute certainty in the future of ether-wave music. He believes in it so firmly that he predicted to us that in a year's time he would come with a full ether-wave orchestra. He is convinced that there will be devices that will play music which will be quite different from one another in timbre, and in character. Just as there are now three different timbres resembling the violin, the cello, and the human voice, so, he says, there will be more. Mr. Henkin, who has much skill in playing the instruments, also firmly believes in the future of aether-wave of music.

According to Stelder in the *Zaanlander* (12-1-29, p.7), the performance included works by Denza, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Puccini, Ganne, Glinka, Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky, Hofmann, Offenbach and Verdi among others. It is reported that '[t]he extraordinary performances offered by the Theremin trio this evening deserves enormous interest, both for their indisputable virtuosity and for the instrument itself, which we can say with certainty that nothing like it has never been seen before'.

- **6th January - Alkmaar [Schouwburg het Gulden Vlies [2.30 pm]]**
- **6th January - Haarlem [Stadsschouwburg [8.00 pm]]**

In the *Nieuwe Haarlemsche Courant* [7-1-29 p.2], 'j.s.' wrote of the Haarlem Stadsschouwburg concert,

For this invention of the Russian Theremin, of which Mr Tscharikoff gave us a brief technical presentation last night, and which was musically underlined by the concert of the gentlemen of the Theremin trio, is something very special, a genius invention, which only needs time to be able to grow into one of the technical wonders of our time ... The lords of the Theremin trio had great success with their beautiful performance, and the listeners were delighted with what had been heard, which indeed borders on a miracle ... For us, this excellent, successful evening was as much a revelation as a pleasure. And we only regret that so few attended this concert ... the invention and the performers deserved more.

The music critic of the *Haarlem Dagblad* [7-1-29, p.9] suggested

Messrs Henkin and Tscharikoff showed musicality and skill in several shorter songs; the quintet from *Rigoletto*, played by the former, even showed a considerable skill in fast staccato figures, which are much more difficult to perform than legato sequences, since the playing hand must immediately hit the distances correctly in the first case; the legato allows the player to control how far the movement of the hand should go. An exuberant applause rewarded Mr. Henkin; but the other solo and duo songs were generally nice to hear and were gratefully accepted. For my taste, however, the players vibrate a bit too strongly and they sometimes exaggerate the effect of the volume pedal, which often makes their readings/interpretations mannered. However, we are still at the beginning of the experiments with these remarkable devices and can therefore not predict where further mechanical perfection and a more highly developed playing technique will take us.

- **7th January - Rotterdam [Gebouw voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen [8.00 pm]]**

The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (8-1-29, p.1-2) discusses Henkin and Tscharikoff's performance in an ambivalent way, suggesting it didn't quite achieve what it promised, and also discussed the lack of attendance at what was an important musical event.

- **8th January - Groningen [Sociëteit De Harmonie [8.00 pm]]**

In the *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* (Groningen) (9th January), K. wrote

Both the soloists played their instruments excellently; the playing reminds one somewhat of the movement of the cellist's hand, but of course the string is missing; one understands, therefore, that [a movement] too far to the right or left gives a false note and that one needs great certainty before being able to play a very simple solo; and of course Mr Tscharikoff and Mr Henkin had that certainty.

- **9th January - Arnhem [Muis Sacrum [8.00 pm]]**
- **10th January - Zeist [Hotel Figi [8.00 pm]]**
- **11th January - Bussum [Concordia [8.00 pm]] (possibly moved to 13th)**

- **12th January - Venlo [Concertgebouw [8.00 pm]]**

The *Limburger Koerier* (14-1-29, p.2) noted that at the Venlo concert,

It was a very interesting evening, from which it could be learned that with the invention of the radio we have not yet reached the end of the possibilities. In the meantime, it is possible to elicit tones on the sensitive aerial and to extract as much as the two of them - the third played the piano - could manage ... This demonstration should have aroused more interest - if only because everyone was given the opportunity to elicit vibrations from the apparatus themselves.

On the 13th January, details of a number of concerts on the same day can be found in the Dutch press, and it is unclear which of these concerts took place.

- **13th January - Eindhoven [Rembrandt Theater [no time]] - possibly cancelled**
- **13th January - Maastricht [Stadsschouwburg [no time]] - possibly cancelled**
- **13th January - Rotterdam [Stadsschouwburg] [2.00 pm]] (An extra show)**
- **13th Bussum [Concordia [8.00 pm]]**

The Bussum concert did take place, with a relatively negative review by Hugo Godron in the *De Gooi- en Eemlander* (14-1-29, p.6) who suggested the auditorium was only a quarter full. He wrote

To our great surprise ... the technicians strolling on stage suddenly turned out to be the performers themselves. It certainly gave us goose bumps. The tone of this trained Mexican dog [the whistling radio sound of an untuned radio] reminded us somewhat of an invention made some years ago that was just as ingenious: the singing saw ... There was the same sweet-sentimental timbre, the same spacious café-chantant vibrato, approaching the trill in the higher registers. One thing is certain: the choice of programme fitted in perfectly. And if it didn't fit, it was made to fit ... Afterwards, the audience was invited to try their hand at it. Everyone "Mexicanised" to their heart's content. But it got too much for us and we disappeared behind the side door after having once again applauded warmly for one of the beginners.

After the Bussum concert on 13th January, it appears a different Theremin Trio line-up [Nielsen, Helmann and the pianist Ligtelijn] may have completed some of the dates on the tour of the Netherlands with concerts at

- **14th January - Nijmegen [Concertgebouw [8.00 pm]]**
- **15th January - Hilversum [Casino 8.00 pm]]**

- **16th January - 's Hertogenbosch [Concertgebouw [8.00 pm]]**

The *Provinciale Noordbrabantsche and 's Hertogenbossche Courant* (17-1-29, p.3) reported that this concert was cancelled at last minute)

- **17th January – Amsterdam – extra show moved to 18th January**

Things become further complicated as on 18th January 2 concerts appear to have taken place simultaneously with different line-ups of the Theremin Trio.

- **18th January - Den Haag [Gebouw voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen [8.00 pm]]**

The *Het Vaderland* (19th January) identified the performers at this concert as '*Nielsen-Helman-Ligtelijn (piano)*'. The *Haagsche Courant* (19th January) was highly critical of the performance, stating

As for the musical results, we cannot hide the fact we were bitterly disappointed. Perhaps it is right, perhaps it is wrong: but we have committed ourselves to take Professor Theremin seriously. Well, then the full truth: it was a demonstration, perhaps it has its place in a variety show, where the necessary attention is paid to "novelties", but Theremin's invention has nothing to do with art.

- **18th and 19th January - Amsterdam [Theater Carre [8.00 pm]]**

Both probably featured Nielsen, Helman, Ligtelijn (piano)

The following planned concerts appear to have been cancelled

- **19th - Utrecht [Tivoli [8.00 pm]]**
- **20th - Deventer [Schouwburg [2.30 pm]]**
- **20th - Zwolle [Odeon [8.00 pm]]**

A Return to Germany

Towards the end of the tour of the Netherlands, it appears that Henkin, Tscharikoff and a new pianist, Korif, were already back performing in Germany. On the **15th January** they appeared at the **Heidelberg Stadthalle**, and on the **17th January** they appeared at the **Kurhaus convention and social centre in Wiesbaden**. The following day they performed at the **Burgwalltheater in Dortmund**. W. Paulussen in the *Dortmunder Zeitung* (19-1-29, p. 32) was critical of the over-use of vibrato and the explanatory lecture stating

Explanations that the audience wanted and expected were given neither by the speaker nor later on the stage. What was said were general technical buzzwords that were often misleading. When it was explained that there are tones in the aether that only have to be amplified because they are too soft, with the intention of speaking in a popular way, many people were certainly given the wrong idea, and old Plato

would certainly have shook his head if this had been presented to him as his music of the spheres.

K, writing in the *Iserlohner Kreisblatt* (25-1-29, p.2) seemed amused by the event, but critical of the claims made for the Theremin instrument, writing that

A series of pieces of music, each played on one or two apparatuses with the support of the grand piano, gave plenty of cause for astonishment from the physical point of view, but an enrichment of the hitherto known means of musical expression was hardly noticeable. When the rather bombastic announcement said that “the orchestra had experienced its hour of birth without instruments”, this statement by an imaginative critic seemed to us at least to be greatly exaggerated.

Further concerts took place in Germany at the **Stadttheater, Krefeld** on the **20th**, and at the **Parkhaus in Bochum** on **21st January**. Here again, the critic K. E. in the *Bochumer Anzeiger* (22-1-29, p.11) is critical of the purity of the electronic timbre of the Theremin, stating that

the tone is euphonious, but has an excessive sweetness that gets on your nerves very quickly. Losing the background noises that are generated by our historical musical instruments are, of course, precisely what I don't consider to be an unquestionable advance: these background noises actually have an aesthetic value that one only really becomes aware of when they are absent.

Following this there were performances at:

- **22nd January - Hans-Sachs-Haus in Gelsenkirchen**
- **23rd January - Saal des Städtischen Konzerthauses in Aachen**
- **24th January - Parkhaus in Bochum**
- **25th January - Beethovenhalle in Bonn**
- **28th January - City Concert Hall in Nachen**

Giesbert writing in the *Kölnische Zeitung* (31-1-29, p.60-61), like other critics, was not impressed with the possibilities of the Theremin instrument, observing

Theremin's ether waves have now also reached us, but they still sound like salon music. Contrary to the announcement, the instrument, which has to be operated with hands (tone generation and pitch) and feet (dynamics), does not give the impression that it can be learned in half an hour; its advantage, the portamento, is at the same time its disadvantage when it comes to performing fast runs and leaps, the tone all too easily betraying its affinity with whistling feedback ...

Following the Nachen concert there appeared to be a 2 week break from performances, though it is possible that further details have yet to be found covering this period. The trail

is picked up between the **14th & 16th of February** when a line-up of the Theremin Trio (possibly Nielsen and Helmann) billed as 'Musik aus der Luft', appeared in **Switzerland in concerts at the Kino Capitol Cinema in Zurich.**

Back in Germany, the Henkin and Tscharikoff line-up of the Theremin Trio began a series of appearances at the **Gloria Palast in Bielefeld** – initially on the **14th and 15th February** and then from **18th to 21st February**. A review of the first appearance on 14th in the *Westfälische Zeitung* (16-2-29, p.40) gave a positive appraisal of the initial appearance, outlining how

Two young gentlemen—the “airwave musicians”, Eugen Henkin and Kristoff Scharikoff, step up to the apparatus. One gives a short lecture in fluent, albeit Russian-accented, German. Then the "concert" begins ... The most fascinating thing about [the sound of the Theremin] ... is undoubtedly the incredible dynamic changeability and thus the possibility of applying nuances of the most subtle delicacy, to enliven the performance in a way that can hardly be compared with other instruments. ... In short: one experiences one of the most outrageous technical/musical inventions of our day ... surrounded by a thousand questions. Various audience members went up to the podium and tried their hand at the apparatuses, which, by the way, are handled in a truly artistic way by the performers, Scharikoff and Henkin.

The *Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten* (16-2-29, p.40) was just as effusive, stating

what Messrs Eugen Henkin and Kristow Tscharikow produce, sometimes on one, sometimes on two apparatuses, with piano accompaniment, is truly amazing. A magic of heavenly sounds in great richness of modulation flows from ghostly regions, from the most delicate pianissimo to the colorful sound that fills the hall.

Following the concerts at the Gloria-Palast, the next recorded concert was on **11th March** at the **Stadttheater in Hagen**, followed by an appearance on 14th March at the **Emelka Theater in Düsseldorf**. **Friday 15th March** saw Henkin, Tscharikoff and Korif at the **Stadttheater in Hamborn**. The *Hamborner Volks-Zeitung* (17-3-29, p.66) reported that

The 12 program numbers, including the "Volga Lied", the Barcarole from the Tales of Hoffmann, a fragment from "Rigoletto", which was particularly impressive and received the greatest applause, demonstrated the fabulous versatility and the beauty of the aether-wave sound. Of course, the player must be exceptionally musical.

There then followed performances at:

- **16th March - Stadthalle in Münster**
- **17th March - Stadttheater in Osnabrück**
- **18th March - Saalbau in Essen & Stadttheater in Oberhausen**

- **20th March - Stadthalle in Solingen**

In a review of the Solingen concert, Dr E. Rosenkaimer in the *Bergische Zeitung* (21-3-29, p. 59) reported that though Henkin and Tscharikoff's performances were impressive, there was little prospect that the Theremin would have an impact on music making as a whole:

Messrs. Henkin (who also spoke a few explanatory words) and Tscharikoff performed a series of pieces with piano accompaniment on two apparatuses, partly solo, partly in pairs. Undoubtedly they can boast of having no serious competitors in their field, for they demonstrated fabulous dexterity in handling the apparatus. It was music throughout ... And the value of the invention for musical practice? We don't think it's of any real use. The whole thing is a witty gimmick; not a musical, but a technical matter ... Only Theremin hopes, with healthy naivety, that his discovery "might gain significance for the future far beyond the boundaries of musical life"....

- **21st March - Kammerspiele im Saalbau in Mönchengladbach**

H. in the *Westdeutsche Landeszeitung* (23-3-29, p.81) said of the Mönchengladbach performance:

Undoubtedly the invention of these apparatuses, in which tones of any pitch and depth can be produced by electromagnetic waves, is an extraordinary thing ... In introductory words, Herr Henkin explained the various options with practical examples. The echo effect was particularly astounding. Through a loudspeaker-like apparatus, the sounds could be heard from the opposite gallery ... Henkin showed more skill in ... making the coloratura from Rigoletto, for example, stand out clearly and distinctly. His hearing also proved to be the more sensitive.

- **22nd March - Schauspielhaus in Remscheid**

- **28th March - Phoebus Palast in Nürnberg**

- **29th, 30th & 31st March 1929 - Renaissance Theater, Berlin**

These were highly significant performances – an experiment with a larger ensemble including a number of musicians from the School of Electrical Music who had, or would in the future, appear as part of the Theremin Trio.

H.T. writing in the *Berliner Börsenzeitung* (30-3-29, p.3) about the first performance described the set up on the stage being 'an "ensemble" of four theremin apparatuses on the podium; behind a number of loudspeakers were on display; finally ... a harp, grand piano, celesta and harmonium also filled the stage.' The concert began with a Bach chorale involving the harmonium and four Theremins. He described how 'Messrs. Henkin, Lubin, Kalecki and Dr. Frederich' pulled 'the sound out of the air with trembling right hands, while the left hands held the electrical switches.' He was critical of the 'weepy, trembling chords floating in the air' and indicated how he 'left the theater with an enriched physical impression. Enough whimpering!'

L. Band of the *Berliner Volkszeitung* (31-3-29, p.4) was more positive about the event, stating that

The sound problem as such is of course of most interest to these instruments. The character depends on the loudspeaker used for reproduction, but also on the skill of the player, whose slightly vibrating hand is able to give life to the sound and more or less exactly find the distance within the electrical oscillating circuit. Then the dynamic liveliness of the sound and the increased flexibility of the tone sequence, up to staccato, are surprising. Messrs. Tscharikoff and Henkin control the "space", that is, the hand movements over the apparatus, with astonishing accuracy.

Dr Arno Huth in the *Hamburger Anzeiger* (2-4-29, p.5) described the performance, its importance as a stepping-stone to future developments and the virtuosity of Evgeny Henkin's playing:

In this concert, which was a station on the way to the electric orchestra, the already known apparatuses were used. The advances this time were not in the technical-construction, but in the musical area: in the lightness and agility of playing, greater security of intonation and, above all, the conquest of the staccato. Of course, this demonstration still demonstrated that in today's initial stage of electric music practice, many things - in terms of tonal purity, softness, composition - were not yet entirely satisfactory - but what possibilities the theremin apparatus offers, the best player, Henkin, proved that he had already mastered with his instrument extremely well and who, being musical by nature and gifted with a good ear, knows how to finely nuance the sound through vibration; his solo study elicited the strongest applause from the listeners and made the concert a great success towards the end.

- **30th & 31st March and 2nd & 3rd April** at the **Phoebus Palast (Cinema) in Nuremberg**
- **1st April - Maffei Theatre in Turin** – an Italian concert – it is unclear who performed at this event and there may have been further Italian concerts as yet undiscovered.
- **10th April - Rialto Café in Dresden**
- **15th, 17th & 20th April - Walhalla Theatre, Halle** in a variety programme
- **16th April - Schauspielhaus in Kiel (Kieler)** - the *Kieler Neueste Nachrichten* (17th April) identifies Henkin, Tscharikoff and Lewin as the performers at this event.
- **16th-18th April - Gloria-Palast in Mannheim**
- **19th-21st April - Capitol Cinema in Mannheim** (N.B. this was not Henkin as he is named in Hamburg review on the same dates.)
- **19th-21st April - Kammerspiele Theater in Hamburg**

Mo. in the *Hamburger Neueste Zeitung* (20-4-29, p.6) identifies Henkin and Tscharikoff as the performers in Hamburg, with 'Mr. Henkin first giving an interesting lecture in broken German on the construction and operation of this apparatus.' N.B. – 21st April cancelled as too little interest (*Harburger Anzeigen und Nachrichten* (22-4-29, p.2)

- **1st to 15th May - Colosseumtheater in Karlsruher** as part of a variety show

A review in the *Karlsruher Tagblatt* (3-5-29, p.7) portrayed the performance by stating

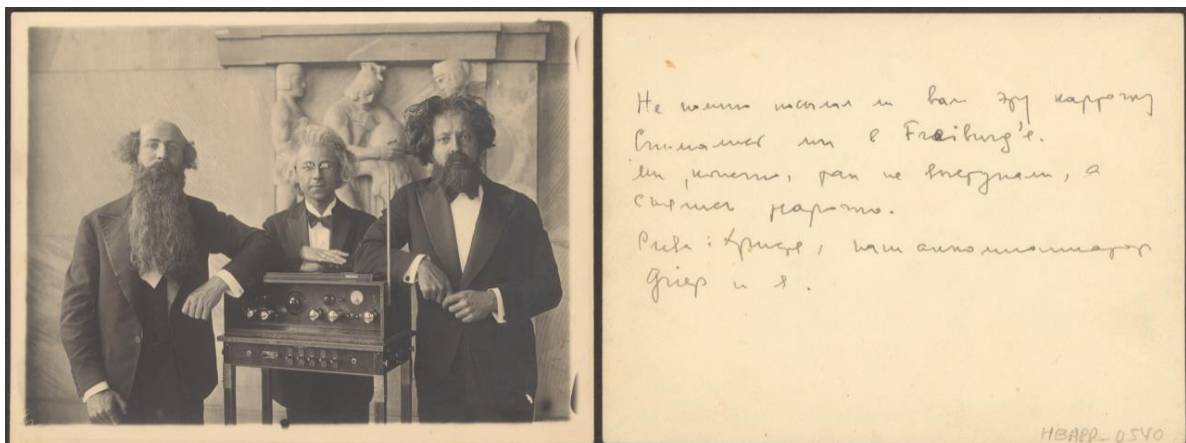
After a "short" introductory lecture on Professor Theremin's work of discovery, the two excellent players perform various pieces, all immersed in enchanting melodiousness ... One listens with devotion and pleasure. Sometimes - in the high register - one thinks one hears a sound of unheard-of quality, sometimes - in the low register - the lush, dark tone of a cello. At the end there was a little lesson for the audience, which was entertaining in the best possible way.

- **21st & 22nd May - Pole Nord in Luxembourg**

The *Escher Tageblatt* (22nd May) review identifies Henkin and Tscharikoff as the performers.

Around this time Wladyslaw Kalecki and A Lubin formed another iteration of the Theremin Trio with Michael Lewin. From this point forwards it is sometimes difficult without direct evidence to attribute concerts to a particular Theremin Trio line-up.

- **2nd June - Stadttheater, Freiburg** (Henkin and Tscharikoff, based on (entertaining!) photographic evidence in the Henkin archive (below) and a later review in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (3-7-29, p.2)



- **3rd June - Stadtgarten zu Bonn**
- **5th June - Kurhauses Redoute, Bad Godesberg am Rhein**

Possibly the first concert of Kalecki and Lubin – they are named in a review in the *Godesberger Volkszeitung* (6-6-29, p.3); 'The gentlemen W. Kalecky and. A. Lubin showed themselves to be technically confident masters of the apparatus. What was offered in the

colourful alternation of solo and duet pieces of music ... with this new sound material in "aerial form" is indeed astonishing.'

- **5th June - Redoutensaale, Bonn** (Kalecki and Lubin)
- **6th June - Stadttheater, Giesener** (Kalecki and Lubin)
- **9th & 11th June - Theatergemeinde, Bregenz, Austria** (Henkin and Tscharikoff)

Vorarlberger Landes-Zeitung (10-6-29, p.3) review:

Then followed the programme ... sometimes played by Mr. Henkin or Mr. Tscharikoff, sometimes by both together, it was an experience, a miracle ... The tones were so delicate, so sure, sometimes you thought you heard a cello sound, sometimes a "voice". After the intermission, Schubert's "Little Ständchen", a wonderfully rendered romance by Rubinstein from Tscharikoff, was even more enchanting. The high point of the evening ... were the duets of Tchaikovsky, Offenbach and Verdi pieces. For Henkin, the rich vibration of the Verdi piece was a particularly beautiful performance. After the end of the programme and rich applause, some gentlemen and ladies from the auditorium were able to try the instrument for themselves ... The attendance was mediocre ...

- **10th June - Stadtgarten, Bonn** (Kalecki and Lubin with Michael Lewin)
- **23rd June - Kurhaus, Bad Salzuflen**

From **June to September**, though there is evidence that a number of Theremin Trio concerts may have taken place in **Bad Oeynhausen, Breslau, Düsseldorf and Erfurt**, Henkin may not have been involved and possibly took a break from performances with the ensemble. The Theremin Trio trail picks up again with the following German concerts:

- **6th - 12th September - Reform Kino in Hamburg**



- **8th - 10th October - Residenz Theater, Leostrasse, Paderborn**



- **11th October** - Schauburg Theater, Iserlohn
- **25th - 31st October** - Kammer-Lichtspiele, Katowice (most likely Kalecki and Lubin – Kalecki was Polish and also performed there in 1930)
- **5th & 6th November** - Alhambra Theater in Hilden (Henkin and Tscharikoff)

Adverts in the *Hildener Rundschau* (4-11-29, p.8) and *Rheinisches Volksblatt* (4-11-29, p.8) identify Henkin and Tscharikoff as the performers. However, on 6-11-29 (p.3), the *Rheinisches Volksblatt* names Kalecki and Lubin as the performers.

- **17th November** - Städtischer Musikverein, Lippstadt (the last Henkin and Tscharikoff concert identified so far)

Soon after other Theremin Trio concerts took place with a new line-up* outside Germany, but it was at this point that Henkin appears to have ended his association with Prof. Theremin's Trio and the School of Electrical Music.

South America – May to July 1930

It appears that after leaving the Theremin Trio towards the end of November 1929, Evgeny Henkin became a freelance solo Theremin performer. It is unclear how and when he began performing in this way as little information has been found so far. However, Henkin's claims to have performed in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil are backed up by evidence found in newspapers from each of these countries from May-July 1930. An important point to note is that during his time in South America the name Theremin only appears in press coverage, not in the publicity for his shows, despite the fact it was likely he was performing on an instrument developed at the Berlin Theremin laboratory during his time in the Theremin Trio. And another crucial point to make is that, despite claims made elsewhere, at present Henkin appears to be the first electrical musician to bring electronic music to South America.

Argentina

Henkin arrived in Argentina in May 1930 with a great deal of publicity in the press. He was hailed as a famous performer of Ondas sonoras [sound waves] who created Música del Aire.



Full page advertisement from the Buenos Aires *Critica* newspaper (16-5-30, p.17)

He appeared at the **Gran Cine Florida in Buenos Aires from 17th May until the 9th June 1930**. A review of his first two performances in *Critica* (19-5-30, p.17) stated that

The public who attended the Florida cinema these last two days, attracted by the intense hype around the Russian artist Henkin, was not disappointed, in fact, because they found an exceptional musician who manages, through the use of the scientific apparatus invented by Professor Theremin, to extract from the air the sound he wants, and which constitutes one of the most curious and original numbers that have been recorded in recent years in the hectic theatrical activity in Buenos Aires ... It is astonishing that a man, using only the five fingers of his right hand ... manages to produce the harmonious sounds of a high quality cello ... Henkin has a great musical temperament, and he is endowed with uncommon abilities required for this difficult art ... And the spectator, already distrustful by nature, when he sees that there is no trickery ... applauds with joy and generosity ...

From the **18th June Evgeny Henkin travelled north west to Rosario in the Santa Fe region and appeared at the Teatro Odeon**, introduced as 'El Ejecutante Misterioso' (the Mysterious Performer) in the 'La Revista del Misterio' (Mystery Revue). It is likely he performed here for one to two weeks, though apart from three listings from the main Rosario newspaper, *Diario Democracia* (18, 20 and 21-6-30), there is little further information at present concerning Henkin's performances or their reception.

Uruguay

On the 27th June, the Montevideo newspaper *La Mañana* (p.3) began to publicise the upcoming appearance of Henkin in Uruguay. A short news item outlined how the

18 de Julio theatre has already received some reviews of the highly attractive variety number Henkin from whom we expect musical performances by means of sound waves, which will be presented on July 1st in the third section of the 18 de Julio theatre, after the performance of the play that appears on the bill.

Much has been said about him, as will be remembered when he offered his first performances in Berlin. These aroused great curiosity and lively comments, some of which have reached us.

Henkin plays the most difficult musical compositions without any visible instrument and without any other aid than a radio apparatus that helps him find the appropriate wave. Once the wave is found, the performer limits himself to making it vibrate, obtaining, according to these comments, very beautiful sounds.

It was also noted that Henkin would provide a private audition on 30th June.

On the 28th June, *La Mañana* (p.7) reported that the 'well-known impresario of the 18 de Julio theater, Mr. Nicolás Messuti had travelled to Rosario to meet Henkin to finalise details of his performances. Messuti had witnessed one of Henkin's performances, convincing him that Henkin would cause a real sensation in Montevideo. The article went on to say

Henkin conducts his auditions using a small and very simple apparatus invented by Professor León Theremin, an engineer with a degree from the National Institute of Leningrad. He controls the "sound waves" as he pleases, selecting the necessary sounds to offer the audience musical performances such as "Samson and Dalila", "The Hindu Song" by Rimsky Korsakoff, "Rigoletto", etc.

A review on the 2nd July concert in , *La Mañana* (p.3) suggested that Henkin's performance

made a splendid impression with the beautiful sounds that he produces from a small antenna placed on the top of a very simple apparatus, an invention of the great Russian professor León Theremin, performing concert pieces and some popular music with such skill, technique and good taste, that he completely enthused the audience, winning loud applause.

Henkin performed from **1st July until 9th July at the 18 de Julio theatre** (Max Wolfson would later also appear here, on 12th September 1931). Soon after Henkin continued his appearances in Brazil.

Brazil

One of the myths of South American electronic music history that appears to have become established is that the Thereminist Max Wolfson introduced electronic music to the continent. Wolfson was a Thereminist who was taught in New York by Leon Theremin, and appeared on two RCA Victor Theremin radio programmes on WJZ in April 1930, and demonstrated the Theremin at the Denton, Cottier & Daniels radio store in Buffalo, New York on 16th and 17th April 1930. There is no evidence that he appeared with Leon Theremin at Carnegie Hall (as suggested by the *Diario La Nación* (Santiago, Chile) (6-1-31, p.4)). He was also described as a 'Jewish-Viennese artist' (*Vida Nuestra* (Chile) (17-4-31, p.1), but little more appears to be known about his career as a Thereminist, though he went to become a successful industrialist in Brazil. In October and November 1930 Wolfson performed in the Teatro Nacional Sucre in Quito, Ecuador, and by December had travelled to Chile and appeared there from December 1930 until April 1931. From July to August he performed in Argentina, in Uruguay in September, and by October 1931 he had arrived in Brazil. Wolfson concerts took place at the Teatro de Santa Isabel (Recife), Teatro Lyrico (Rio de Janeiro), and Teatro Sant'Anna (São Paul). Later appearances were in Santos, Porto Alegre, Pelotas and Rio Grande. It is at this point that the Theremin trail goes cold and there is currently no easily obtainable information about Wolfson concerning any more of his musical activities. His later business career as a Brazilian industrialist is well documented.

However, the relatively inexperienced Wolfson had been beaten to South America by Henkin who was a widely experienced Theremin player with direct links to Leon Theremin's technical and artistic activities in Berlin. In 1930, Henkin had already performed in Argentina and Uruguay before arriving in Brazil, over a year before Wolfson, and as such Evgeny Henkin is evidentially the first to bring electronic music to the continent.

Henkin initially appeared at the **Odeon in Rio De Janeiro**, with the *Correio Da Manha* (8-7-30, p.7) writing before his **14th July debut** that

Henkin is the musico electrico (electric musician). It is a phenomenon that can only be understood by seeing and hearing it. On stage, putting his hand near an exquisite radio type instrument, he performs any music that the public asks for. And that's not all, because anyone who wants to can go on stage and play the music that comes to mind on the instrument.

O Paiz (12-7-30, p.4) indicated to Brazilian readers that Henkin had earlier performed in Argentina before travelling to Brazil.

The artists Henkin and Vianor should arrive via the *Demerara* next Monday from Buenos Aires. They are two true celebrities of their kind, having both travelled to Europe and the United States [not true of Henkin], under widespread applause, and went on to Buenos Aires, under a special contract that extends to us. They are two artists that are unconnected, and only chance brings them together, on the same steamer, to Rio de Janeiro. Henkin and Vianor, were hired by Companhia Brasil Cinematographica, and should premiere on Monday; the day after tomorrow at the Odeon.

Henkin performed at the **Rio De Janeiro Odeon from 14th – 20th July** before moving on to São Paulo. The São Paulo newspaper *A Gazeta* (17-7-30, p.4) reported on Henkin's upcoming arrival and performances, stating that

Next Tuesday, in the Red Room of the Odeon, in continuation of the season of mixed stage and screen shows, two interesting novelties for São Paulo will open, which during this week are being applauded by the people of Rio de Janeiro on the stage of the Odeon ... One is Henkin, the electric musician, who plays with his instrument any song asked of him by the audience. The other is Vianor, who arrives from London, Paris, New York, Buenos Aires and now Rio, being a success as a female impersonator ... This number will accompany the film "Colhendo amo res", which will premiere on Monday.

As mentioned previously, the name 'Theremin' does not appear anywhere in the press advertising associated with these appearances – as indicated, Henkin is simply described as 'O Músico Elétrico' [the Electric Musician]. According to press details, Henkin played a number of shows at the **São Paulo Odeon from the 22nd to the 28th July**. Though there is widespread coverage in the entertainment listings sections of several Brazilian newspapers (e.g. *Folha da Manhã*, *Diario Carioca*, *Diario de Noticias*, *Gazeta de Noticias*, *O Jornal*, *Critica*, *Jornal Do Brasil*, *A Noite*, *O Paiz*, *Correio Da Manha* and *A Gazeta*) concerning Henkin's appearances, there are currently no further details about his performances or audience reactions. With such extensive coverage, it is a surprise that Henkin has not so far been recognised as the first to bring electronic music performance to Brazil (and Argentina and Uruguay), not Max Wolfson.

Back to Europe

From July 1930 until late 1934, there are only sporadic details concerning Evgeny Henkin's activities as a Thereminist. For example, in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (20th November 1931), reported that at the Pavilion in Leipzig Henkin would be appearing in an afternoon and evening performance of 'Die Musik aus der Luft' with his 'Theremin-Aetherwellen Apparat'.

However, what is available demonstrates that he was also an important contributor to further Theremin developments in Germany, even after the Berlin Theremin laboratory and School of Electrical Music ceased activities in mid-1930.

1932

The HHI and the *Konzert auf Elektrischen Instrumenten* (19th October 1932)

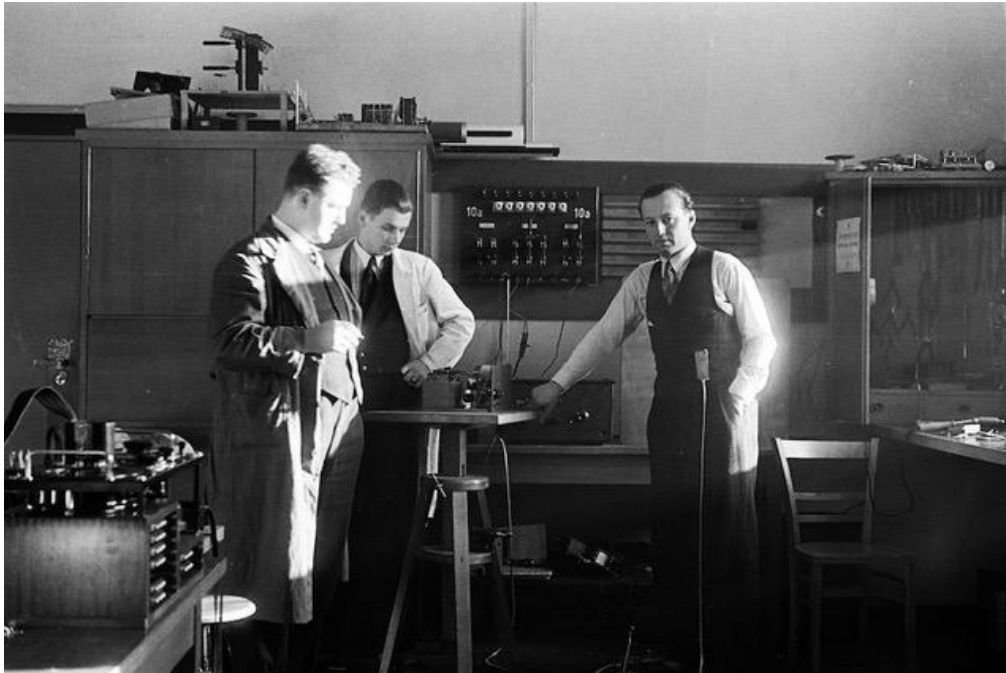
Apart from Henkin's electric/electronic music performances in South America in summer 1930, it has not been possible to find many details of his performances between mid-1930

and late 1934. However, some tantalising information gained from wider research and contained in some images in the Henkin archive help tell more of the story.

The following images document a visit (or visits) to the newly built Heinrich Hertz Institute (1930) in Berlin – the first image is an exterior shot that clearly identifies the HHI building and engineers and researchers from the Institute. It is possible that the person second from the left is Prof. Dr. Gustav Leithäuser, head of the High Frequency Department at the Institute.



In the second photograph (below) Evgeny Henkin is pictured in a HHI laboratory. Under Gustav Leithäuser, the HHI was at this time further developing a small Theremin-style device that ultimately it hoped to market for home music making in Germany. This would seem to be a continuation of work that was begun by the Theremin laboratory in Berlin as Michael Lewin of the School of Electrical Music had discussed such a device as early as 1928. This domestic device was intended to be amplified through a radio, and unlike the instrument Leon Theremin had developed that was controlled with two antenna, this instrument had a hand held tonal on/off switch (here attached to Henkin's waistcoat) and foot pedals to control volume (N.B. this was an early design by Leon Theremin that was later superseded in his own work by the two antenna model). It is unclear what Henkin's role was in these developments, but as a widely recognised skilled performer on the Aetherwellen instrument, and due to his connections to the earlier Theremin laboratory, he was probably brought in during the testing stages of the new HHI device.



This image features, from left to right: Martin Liebau and Hermann Rahmer (HHI engineers) and Evgeny Henkin at a Heinrich Hertz Institut laboratory.

Rahmer had previously been involved with the Berlin Theremin laboratory and with supporting Theremin Trio performances, including in Copenhagen and Vienna.

Although there is currently no other information available about Henkin's work with the HHI, on **19th October 1932** he took part in a German radio broadcast that was the first radio concert of an orchestra consisting exclusively of electric instruments. At this concert electronic instruments developed at the HHI and the Rundfunkversuchsstelle at the Berlin Staatlich-akademische Hochschule für Musik were presented. After 1930 both Berlin institutions were encouraged by the Ministry of Culture to co-operate and work closely together in developing and presenting electronic musical instruments to a wider public at radio industry shows and elsewhere. (Donhauser 2007: 46)



Radio listing from the *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung* (Austria) (19th October 1932) – Evgeny Henkin's name is misprinted as 'Eugen Henking'.



A view of the 'Funk-Stunde' Berlin radio 'Konzert auf Elektrischen Instrumenten' (19th October 1932)
[original source unknown – http://hartwig.bplaced.net/text/alte_artikel/1932_Trautonium_ua/1932_e_m.htm]

The hour-long concert featured two Theremin style instruments (played by Evgeny Henkin and Martin Taubmann) as well as a Trautonium, a Hellertion and a Neo-Bechstein keyboard instrument. Alongside Henkin and Taubmann, Dr Gustav Leithauser of the HHI, Oscar Sala, Bruno Hellberger and Waldemar Padwa appeared on the bill.

The Finnish newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* (20th October) wrote of the broadcast event that was available to listeners across Europe:

About four or five years ago, the world's newspapers carried the news that an engineer ... Theremin, had invented an electrical device that could play any kind of music. This news attracted a fair amount of attention, but recently there has not been much more publicity about this device.

However, the device was not abandoned after the invention. On the contrary, it has been quietly improved and further developed. This device and other types of electronic music devices based on its basic idea were on show to the public at this autumn's German radio exhibitions. However, the first broadcast demonstration of the equipment took place only yesterday, when the Berlin Funkstunde (public radio station) held an electric instrument concert from 21:00 to 22:00 Finnish time. This very interesting programme was broadcast by the following radio stations: Berlin, Breslau, Königsberg, Leipzig, München, Hamburg and Vienna.

... The audience was treated to music performed on the following devices; Trautonium, Theremin, Hellertion, Neo-Bechstein piano, etc. The music provided by the various devices was good, in many cases even more pleasant than that provided by a conventional instrument of the same type. The low and high notes came out brighter and fuller on several instruments than on flutes and cellos. The military march at the end of the programme, which was supposed to mirror the performance of a full orchestra, sounded magnificent. Those radio listeners who were listening to

these foreign stations at the time and understood what the broadcast was about must have been satisfied with their reception of the evening's foreign radio programme, hence the uniqueness of the event.

After this performance, though a further broadcast took place in January 1933, Henkin does not seem to have been involved in further activities at the HHI. In fact with the Nazi party taking power in Germany in 1933, the HHI's electronic musical instrument activities seem to have eventually diminished, with the Nazi regime most interested in supporting the development of the German Trautonium, and viewing the Theremin as a 'Soviet-Jewish' instrument. Notably, Dr Gustav Leithäuser who championed the development of the Theremin-style instrument at the HHI was by 1933 tasked to head up the development of the German 'People's Radio' through which the Nazis widely broadcast their propaganda, a version of which appeared on the cover of Kraftwerk's 1975 album *Radio-Aktivität*. Eventually by 1936 Leithäuser was removed from his duties at the HHI due to Jewish family connections, though returned there after World War Two.

'L.A' in the *Jüdisch-liberale Zeitung* (20-9-1933 p.2) reported on an event, a 'Colourful Evening' organised by the Die Künstlerhilfe der Jüdischen Gemeinde (Artists' Aid of the Jewish Community). At this event a variety of performers contributed, as did Evgeny Henkin.

Of a more serious nature was the performance of aether wave music by Eugen Henkin, who knew how to interest and satisfy the audience not only with the technically innovative nature of sound generation in an electric field, but also with artistic interest. The audience was surprised by the beauty of the sound and the size of the tonal range, which spans a good three octaves.

On 14th October 1933 Henkin appeared at another Artists' Aid of the Jewish Community cabaret evening at the Logenhaus, Kleiststraße. He performed alongside soprano Elsa Koch (who escaped to Basel with her husband Gustav, former tenor with the Berlin State Opera, in 1937 - their daughter Helga Kosta also became a successful soprano singer), the tenor Ralf Berndt, baritone Fritz (Frederick) Lechner (who left for the USA in 1936), piano parodist Alfred Pelz, singer and composer Willy Rosen (who was murdered in Auschwitz on 1st October 1944), actors Alfons Fink and Josef Stein and pianist Leo Taubmann.

This was followed by a solo performance at Café Leon [Kurfürstendamm 156] (*Jüdisch-liberale Zeitung* 8/12/1933 p.6) on 10th December 1933. The newspaper reported

There is a virtuoso in the new field of musical ether waves - and that is Eugen Henkin. Eugen Henkin is currently testing the effects of the device in this large hall and is very satisfied; it works excellently. In between, Eugen Henkin tells us about the enthusiastic successes this ether wave theremin has generated everywhere on his American tour. This coming Sunday will be a unique appearance by Mr. Henkin before his Italian tour. We left the rehearsal, where we had made the acquaintance of Mr. Henkin and his mysterious instrument, with the awareness of being able to say to all of you: "Go and see this!"

On the same page of the newspaper, there is a news item from Stettin (now Szczecin in Poland) reporting on an art evening where Henkin appeared alongside others involved in the earlier cabaret events.

Die “Musenschaukel” Cabaret – Clou Konzerthaus (11th February 1934)

Between Evgeny Henkin’s October 1932 appearance on German radio and early 1934 there is little information, other than that mentioned above, as to how he sustained his career in this period. It is important to note that in this same post-1929 period his former musical partner Kristy Tsharikoff performed in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, and there is a great deal of press coverage of his activities inside, then outside, Germany. This isn’t the case for Henkin. There is some evidence that he continued to perform across Europe. For example, photographs in the Henkin Archive taken in Bautzen, eastern Germany outside the Café Lehmann (a Konditorei (Pâtisserie)) feature a poster for an evening performance by Evgeny Henkin in the background on the café window. It is therefore possible Henkin either had an agent or promoter who organised low-key, small-scale performances for him, or he simply organised these himself.

However, more notable and historically significant is a photograph (below) of a cabaret poster featuring Henkin’s name, taken outside the **Clou Konzerthaus, Berlin in February 1934**. The text on the photograph is as follows:

At the Clou 11 February, 4 o'clock from Willi Schaeffers.
Trude Hesterberg's *Musenschaukel*.

As guests Trude Hesterberg [and] Karl Beckmann / Kurt Ackermann / Bea(te) Molen / Albert Hormann / Gunther Vogt / Eva Krauss / Eva Boehm / on the piano: Erwin Toope

Resi Langer / Peter Sachoe / Dinah Grace / Greta Weiser / Schumakoff / Baby Gray / Schneider - Duncker / **E. A. Henkin** / Leslie / Ingrid Schlee / 5 Parodisters / Paul Strasser

Table Ordering, Flora A2 1813/14

This photograph provides evidence of Evgeny Henkin’s involvement with **Trude Hesterberg’s satirical-literary cabaret *Musenschaukel* on 11th February 1934**. According to historical sources, Trude Hesterberg established the cabaret in November 1933 at the Pavillon Mascotte. The usual story found in a number of writings on Berlin cabarets in the pre-WWII period is that the *Musenschaukel* [The Muses Swing] cabaret was closed in January 1934 following criticism from a Nazi newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. One source suggested it was banned by Goebbels propaganda ministry.

However, this photograph questions this accepted history. In Klaus Budzinski and Reinhard Hippen’s (2016) *Metzler Kabarett Lexikon* (Metzler Cabaret Dictionary), there is mention that in January 1934 a new cabaret programme followed directly on from the *Musenschaukel* – this was a cabaret revue called *Windstärke 10* by Hanns Fritz Beckmann, Frank Günther and Günter Neumann. Budzinski and Hippen suggest this cabaret closed

(presumably at the Pavillon Mascotte) at the end of January, and named all the main performers listed in Evgeny Henkin's photograph.



This story seems incomplete as the *Musenschaukel* cabaret appeared at least one more time on **11th February at the Clou Konzerthaus in Berlin** as is demonstrated by the information contained in this photograph. And this is where things get very interesting as this one-off cabaret performance has important historical resonances.

The Clou Konzerthaus was a venue that regularly staged events for the Nazi party. One online source² notes that from as 'early as 1927 mass events of the National Socialists took place at the Clou. Parts of the propaganda apparatus were located in the main building and the annex buildings with the publishing and printing house.' Fedor de Vries provides more details, outlining how on 1 May 1927 Adolf Hitler made his first appearance in Berlin at the Clou, at the Nazis first mass event in the city. Additionally he writes that 'The Nazi

propaganda papers "Völkischer Beobachter", "Schwarzes Korps" and "Der Angriff" were also printed here.' Furthermore, de Vries indicates that 'The Gestapo used the building for torture and interrogations.'³ Images of the Clou Konzerthaus available in the Getty⁴ and Alamy⁵ photographic archives demonstrate that not only did political and business meetings take place there, but also children's Christmas parties staged by the Nazis, as well as other German nationalist events. From 28 February 1943, a large number of Jewish forced labourers were registered by the SS at the Clou building before being sent to concentration camps and to their deaths. (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: 114)

This raises many questions about how the *Musenschaukel* cabaret, that was said to be frowned on by the Nazis (and supposedly had already ended), found its way to the 'Nazi' Clou Konzerthaus less than two weeks after it was supposedly banned! The question of Nazi approval or disapproval of the event is complicated by information available at the *Cabaret Berlin* website. Here it is suggested that Trude Hesterberg joined the Nazi Party and The Fighting League for German Culture [Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur] in January 1933. Hesterberg later explained this decision by stating

As a woman and an artist I naturally have been influenced by all tendencies of the times, but I never became a politician. I have always instinctively considered my art as a megaphone of the popular opinions of the day. Out of this sense of artistic duty, I became a member of the Nazi party and the Fighting League.

As the *Cabaret Berlin* site suggests this possibly pragmatic decision was viewed as opportunism by the Nazi authorities, and she was placed under a great deal of scrutiny (though eventually she continued to perform throughout the Nazi period at the Kabarett der Komiker (Kadeko) in Berlin). The original *Musenschaukel* cabaret was an attempt to racially sanitise and Germanise cabaret entertainment, aiming to provide 'a popular cabaret which contains nothing foreign ... only numbers that are anchored in our nature and whose music is derived from folk songs.'

Peter Jelavich (1991: 181) noted that the original programme notes for the *Musenschaukel* stated 'Far be it for us to want to illuminate politics from our small stage ... We pursue just one goal, to reward hard-working people with a few cheerful hours.' This claim should be understood, as Jelavich suggests, against the backdrop of all cabarets that criticised the Nazi regime being eventually closed by 1935, with many cabaret performers who stayed in Germany or who were arrested in occupied Europe being murdered by the Nazis in concentration camps. Hesterberg was clearly attempting to distance herself from the more politically and socially critical forms of cabaret in Berlin in the 1930s in an act of self-preservation. However it seems the original *Musenschaukel* cabarets, and the final performance at the Clou Konzerthaus, were a commercial disaster – and as the *Cabaret Berlin* site indicates, this accounted for the cabaret's closure - it was not banned.

Evgeny Henkin's photograph of the Clou Konzerthaus therefore places him at the centre of cultural and political conflict in the early years of the Third Reich, performing on a stage and

in a building used by the Nazis for party events and activities, and as a Russian from a Jewish family it is hard to imagine how he psychologically navigated his way through this event - never mind through Berlin as a whole in this period - before being forced to end his Theremin performances in late 1934.

An important final point to make is that The Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer or RKK) was established on 22 September 1933 in Germany as a professional organisation for those working in all areas of German creative and cultural life. This was an attempt by Joseph Goebbels to control German cultural activities and promote Aryan art consistent with Nazi ideals as part of the wider process known as *Gleichschaltung* – the totalitarian Nazification of German life. Artists or cultural workers had to apply for membership of the relevant industry subdivision (film, theatre, music, fine arts etc.) and present a certificate proving their Aryan credentials to be able to continue working. If an application was rejected, an occupational ban ensued. The Nazi regime therefore began to deprive targeted population groups - those defined as "full", "half" or "quarter Jews" and other "foreign races" - of their civil rights and their ability to freely make a living. Evgeny Henkin from September 1933 was therefore performing in Germany under the threat of such a ban for almost a year and it appears that finally in late 1934 he was effectively banned from performing on the Theremin on the German stage or any other public venue.

The Final Performances

On the 26th June 1934, 4 months after the Musenschaukel cabaret, another performance has been found for Evgeny Henkin. By 1934 Jewish performers were being suppressed and sidelined from mainstream cultural life in Germany. In Berlin, The Artists' Aid of the Jewish Community since 1933 had attempted to sustain Jewish social and cultural life through a range of events, including concerts, school and community social events, and house concerts. As indicated, Henkin had already appeared at other cabaret events organised for the Jewish community in Berlin.

On this date, Dr. Wongtschowski of Olivaer Platz hosted an entertainment event that featured both Evgeny Henkin and Leo Taubmann.⁷ The latter was the brother of Martin Taubmann of the School of Electrical Music and Theremin-Trio. Leo studied at the Berlin Academy of Music from 1925-29, and towards the end of his studies performed as a piano accompanist for a number of Henkin and Tscharikoff's Theremin-Trio concerts. He also appeared regularly on German radio broadcasts via the Heilsberg transmitter from 1930-March 1933, however his options to perform, like Henkin's, increasingly diminished through the 1930s. In 1937 he left Germany - after performing at many Jewish social and cultural events up until that point in time for the USA where he developed a successful teaching career (including at Boston University and the Juillard School) and worked as an accompanist (e.g. with Eileen Farrell, Jon Vickers, George London, Birgit Nilsson, Yannula Pappas and Lucretia West among others).

Finally, the researcher Alexander Darda through forensic examination of photographs in the Henkin Brothers Archive has identified that in late summer/early autumn 1934, Evgeny

Henkin travelled to Bautzen and Görlitz (Saxony), and Schweidnitz (Silesia) and performed concerts in these towns. Beyond this, it has as yet been difficult to find any further information about Evgeny Henkin's musical activities in 1934, and as they may have been clandestine or outside mainstream German cultural life, it is difficult to imagine anything more can be found.

Endnotes

1. The *Hufvudstadsbladet* (24th September p.4) mistakenly named Hermann Rahmer, a radio engineer from the Theremin Laboratory, as a performer alongside Christoph (Kristy) Tscharikoff and the Theremin School musical director and pianist Michael Lewin. Notably Rahmer is not listed as a performer in any other Theremin Trio concerts.
2. Galerie 123 - <https://www.galerie123.com/en/original-vintage-poster/41408/clou-berliner-konzerthaus/>
3. Traces of War - <https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/3002/Clou-Concert-Hall.htm>
4. <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/berlin-konzerthaus-clou>
5. <https://www.alamy.com/berlin-konzerthaus-clou-image218353976.html>
6. *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin* 23-6-1934 p.6 <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/newspaper/item/WRCY3YY5NVK5WHUIR7KPUW7VQVE66JPM?query=%22Leo+Taubmann%22&fromDay=1&fromMonth=1&fromYear=1932&toDay=14&toMonth=10&toYear=1935&hit=3&issuepage=6>
7. Among the others named at the 26th June 1934 event where Taubmann and Henkin appeared were:
 - **Annemarie Hase** - a German actor and successful cabaret performer in the Weimar era who escaped to Britain in 1936, returned to Berlin after World War 2 and developed a career as an East German actress.
 - **Lili Kann** - an actor who escaped Germany and had a successful acting career in Britain.
 - **Lola Polajewer** - a soprano who had a successful stage and recording career, and died in 1935.
 - **(Stanley) Jaks** - a comedy magician and mentalist who escaped Germany in the mid-1930s, and by 1951 was a US citizen.
 - **Egon Jacobsohn** – possibly the well-known Berlin reporter who escaped Germany and became successful in Britain under the name Egon Jameson.

* The musicians and technicians from the *Berlin School of Electrical Music* who formed the different iterations of the Theremin Trio - alongside the pianists who performed with them – that have been identified so far in my research are as follows:

Michael Lewin (Musical Director – School of Electrical Music)
Herman Rahmer – Technical Manager

Trio1: *Evgeny Henkin* | *Kristy Tscharikoff*
Piano = *Michael Lewin, Korif, Leo Taubmann* and *Grimm*

Trio 2: *Alfred Nielsen* | *Willy Helman(n)*
Piano = *Leo Leur* and *Ligtelijn*

Trio 3: *Wladyslaw Kalecki* | *A Lubin*
Piano = *Michael Lewin* and *Leo Taubmann*

Trio 4: *Martin Taubmann* | *Hans Kußner*
Piano = Dora Lobschuß

Renaissance Theatre – Theremin Orchestra – (28, 30 and 31-3-29)
Michael Lewin (Conductor)
Evgeny Henkin | Kristy Tscharikoff | A Lubin | Wladyslaw Kalecki | Dr. Frederich
Rahel Kaufmann (singer)

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