

## Introduction to the New Edition

Clara Rockmore began her musical life playing the violin. At four, she was the youngest student ever to be admitted to the famed St. Petersburg Conservatory. There she began her studies with Leopold Auer, teacher of Jascha Heifetz and Efrem Zimbalist. She concertized with her sister, Nadia Reisenberg, until the age of nineteen, when an injury to her arm forced her to give up the violin. The end of one career was the beginning of another. She soon took to another instrument; using principles and philosophies learned from Auer, her incredible natural abilities enabled her to devise a technique for playing a new and unique instrument, the **theremin**.

With this technique, Rockmore soon established herself as *the* premier virtuoso of the instrument. Had it not been for Rockmore's Theremin-built instrument (as opposed to the RCA theremin), her technique could not have been developed to the extent that it was. Theremins of that day were quite slow to respond to the finer nuances of dynamic shading (loud and softness) and lacked the range (five octaves) of her instrument. Her collaboration with Prof. Theremin not only created an instrument with an improved response and range, it also created the tone we now associate with better theremins.

One difficulty encountered by Rockmore when teaching students was that of transferring what could be done on her instrument, to the student's instrument. It would be many years before other theremins possessed the qualities of the Rockmore theremin.

Rockmore kept a busy schedule as a concert thereminist for several decades, performing not only original pieces composed for the instrument, but transcriptions of cello and violin works as well. Rockmore expended considerable effort legitimizing the theremin during a era when the instrument had been relegated to producing the spooky sound effects used in motion pictures. She paved a way for the modern musician of today. For that, we are all thankful. The theremin is first and foremost, a **musical** instrument.

With the advent of the keyboard synthesizer, the theremin almost slipped into oblivion. Though manufacturers such as Bob Moog (of MOOG™ synthesizer fame) still made an occasional theremin, it wasn't until the early 1990's that the theremin found itself back in the limelight. With the release of the documentary, **Theremin: An Electronic Odyssey**, a renewed interest in the instrument emerged. People who had never heard the word, *Theremin*, were drawn to the story, and those of us who had already been familiar with the instrument felt a closer bond. Our instrument's story was finally being told! The theremin was now *in*; soon companies would re-introduce theremins to the marketplace. The theremin had never really gone away, but one could not help but view this as a *comeback*.

It was during this time of renewed interest that Clara Rockmore began writing down her technique for future thereminists. The method book was called, **The Art of the Theremin**, and was dedicated to Bob Moog. Moog's company, Big Briar, Inc. (1-800-948-1990), has just released, **Clara Rockmore: The Greatest Theremin Virtuosa**, an excellent companion video to the method book.

The edition you are holding is an updated, **The Art of the Theremin**. The musical examples are easier to read, having been professionally set by Jeffrey McFarland-Johnson, and only the slightest changes were made to the actual text, where certain obvious grammatical errors had occurred within the original edition.

In accordance with Mrs. Rockmore's wishes, this new edition is distributed free of charge. It is my sincere hope that these pages will serve the reader well in establishing the technique needed to play the theremin.

David Miller

Shreveport, LA  
August 30, 1998